

Dances and Dreams

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Summary: Beginning a little before the end of HTTYD2 (at a certain funeral) and continuing further into Hiccup's time as chief, facing the challenges, rigors, dangers and betrayals of life on Berk. (I rewrote the final third of the movie as I thought it could be less childish).

1. Chapter 1

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><p>Chapter 1: Stoick's Ship

He carried his father's corpse down to the shore. The superhuman size of Stoick the Vast dwarfed him as he carried the lifeless body away from the burned and ravaged battlefield. All around him were the remains of men and dragons alike, covered in ice and snow, in ash and in blood.

The battle ended hours ago, the fires that covered large areas of this coast were mostly extinguished, a few smoldering pieces of wood was all that remained of the massive blazes that illuminated the field of battle. Spikes of ice protruded from the ground from where the Alphas unleashed their storms of frost.

The body of the fallen Alpha lay to his left, by the mountain it had created as a sanctuary to dragonkind. The sun was setting now, its final rays of light protruding from behind the glacial mountain. The setting sun was painting the sky in shades of red and orange, as though the infernos of today's battle have ascended to the heavens to light the halls of Valhalla.

He stumbled, his prosthetic leg sliding on a frozen shield that belonged to one of Drago's men. He regained his balance, sighed and watched the small cloud of his breath dissipate in the evening air. He continued walking, away from the carnage behind him, the weight of his father on his back a reassuring comfort, as though he was still alive, embracing him in his colossal grasp. Someone walked up behind him, taking his father's right arm and putting it over their shoulder. He turned his head sideways, to face the unwanted aid.

"No!" he yelled at the slender blond vikingess, her blue eyes looked back at him with a look of confusion. "No... Astrid... I want to.. no, I have to do this myself." he told her

"But we can help, all of us." Astrid said, gesturing at the gathered crowd behind him.

"I have to get something right for dad, just once."

The blond nodded, and walked on, the other's following close behind.

As his mother came alongside him, she looked at his eyes, a mournful look on her face and a lone tear streaming from her right eye. "Son, please, let me help... he.. I.. I'm sorry.." Valka said, her voice sounding almost like a whimper as she looked on at her son carrying the man she was reunited with only hours ago. He gave his mother a small nod, a tear escaping his eye, he wiped it off swiftly. Valka stood next to him, surrounding herself in Stoick's grasp, sharing his weight around the two of them. The auburn haired family walked on, the mother and son carrying the the father's body through the snow.

It took them another half an hour to pull the body far enough away from the battleground, that neither the carnage of the battle, nor the massive form of the downed Alpha were visible.

Before them stood the group of seven, illuminated in the darkness only by a flickering torch held by Gobber the Belch. His cousin, Snotlout, was standing next to a boat, smaller than the drakkars used for sailing, only a bit larger than a row boat. Drag marks from the boat led to an upturned drakkar, whose cabin looked recently scavenged. Dry looking wood, and clay jars of what he assumed to be oil were neatly stacked next to the boat.

"Thank you" he told them as he propped his father's corpse by the upturned ship.

"It's the least we could do," Astrid spoke on behalf of everyone, "for our chief... and for you."

He didn't hear her. He looked at his father's body, it was as if he just fell asleep sitting, if not for the massive burn mark on his chest, exposing scorched muscle and broken ribs. His father, who has always been there to protect him, to guard him, a lot of the time from his own folly, is no more, he collapsed on his knees. This man, who has protected him all his life, who even when he disappointed him again and again, has in the end stood by him, is lying here, broken. And it's all my fault. A lone tear slid down his cheek, he let it fall, down his cheeks and off the scar on his chin, it froze before

hitting the snow and gravel of the frozen shore.

He got up and blinked his eyes clean. He was surprised when he saw his right side was red, yet there was no wound on him, at least nothing bleeding. His father's eyes were still open, yet empty and devoid of life. He put two fingers on the chief's eyelids and closed them. He sensed something was missing as he looked at his father. "His axe!" he suddenly yelled, "where is it, where.."

"Relax lad," Gobber said, unslinging a double bladed battleaxe from his back "I got et."

Gobber, always the loyal friend, went up to the corpse, axe held firmly in his useable hand. The one armed man knelt down before the fallen chief, a sorrowful look on his face. "The'a ya are my old friend." He said as he put the axe into its owner's arms, his burnt, greying golden mustache swaying on his upper lip. "We'll mee' again in Odin's heavenly halls."

He looked at Gobber in his moment of silence and watch the big man get up clumsily. Gobber put his one good hand on the youth's shoulder, "come on lad, the'as still work ta be don'." He nodded to the older man and followed him to the boat.

The boat was tipped upright, the beginnings of a makeshift pyre being built on top of it. "He should be given a proper funeral, one fit for a chief." Astrid said as he neared. Gobber left his side and faced away from the group, he could have sworn he heard a muffled weep escape the man. The half-cripple went up to the twins, Ruffnut and Tuffnut, Fishlegs, Eret and Snotlout and began chucking pieces of wood up onto the boat.

"it should have been me." He whispered quietly to Astrid beside him. Astrid put on a steeled expression, "No." she simply said, then added "Your father did this not only for you, but for the tribe as a whole, you are the heir.. the chief, your father would not want you to blame yourself in this, he died with honor. If you want to blame anyone, blame Drago, and that spawn-of-Loki Alpha of his!" She said this in a quiet but deliberate voice that pierced him to his core and sent a shiver down his spine. Her face softened up, as did her voice, "I don't know what I would have done if it had been you." She said. He hugged her, and they stood embracing one another for a short while.

They broke off from one another, Astrid moving a lock of his wild, dirt covered, auburn hair from his face. They faced the boat, the pyre almost finished, the twins just laying down the final pieces of wood on the square platform. "We should help them." He said as Eret passed them, carrying jars of oil to the pyre. They walked up and each took some of the clay jars, that they carried back to the boat. It took them several trips to get all the jars to the pyre, where some of them were being poured onto the wooden platform.

As he looked at everyone, at all their dirt covered faces, at all the mournful looks he spotted someone missing. As he turned, he saw Gobber carrying the body of Stoick the Vast in his arms, like he was cradling a child. Valka walked beside him, Stoick's double bladed axe held firm in her arms, his helmet on her head.

With his help they laid the body down on the pyre on top of the boat.

Stoick's body was lying straight, facing up. His axe was on his chest, the blades on the side away from his face. Above his head, was his helmet, the colossal horns made the sight more impressive. The chief looked like he could be sleeping.

He walked up to his father, drew the dagger on his forearm and made a shallow cut on the palm of his left hand. He winced at the pain. Dabbing the blood on his thumb, he drew a rune on his father's forehead, a red lightning bolt in the centre of the great man's head.

He stepped down from the boat as his father's body was covered in the oil. As the twins finished with the oil and stepped down, all eight of them pushed the boat forward. Their shoulders against the hard wood of the ship, the scene illuminated by the lone torch Gobber stuck in the ground. The ship began to move, it inched forward slowly, until it hit the water. They kept pushing it, their feet entering the freezing sea. They were up to their waist in water when the ship was finally taken by the sea, it began to ever so slowly drift forward.

They waded back to shore, the ship already a hundred feet away from the bank. Eret walked up to him, and handed him a bow and a single arrow.. "Here, take this, you should have the honor." The hunter said, "I am sorry for all this, if my apology anything to you."

He took the bow and arrow. The arrowhead was covered in oil-soaked rags. Gobber walked up to him, torch in hand, "He'a ya go lad." The half-cripple said as he lit the arrow. He could feel the heat coming off of the arrowhead on his arm and winced as the flame licked at his hand a few hairs were burned away. He nocked the arrow and took a step back. "Go on son." Valka said.

He pulled the bow back, drawing the string back past his chin. His hand trembled as the large wooden bow tensed and bent back. "Tyr," he whispered quietly to himself, "guide this arrow to my father, let me do this one thing right. It's the least I could do for him." He closed his eyes, and slid his forefinger off the bowstring.

The arrow flew forward with a Thunk! It flew over the frigid sea and sailed in a clean arc to its destination, over three hundred feet away. No one saw the arrow strike the pyre, no one heard it, Yet the boat erupted into flames all the same. The fire cast a bright light on the shore, even as it was heading away from it, captivating the onlookers as it brought with it the smell of burning pine and the sickly smell of burning flesh, a smell most of them were used to.

Gobber began the prayer, torch held high, he said "May the Valkyries guide you to Odin's bountiful halls, may you join the great heroes of Asgard in their valorous deeds, may the Allfather accept you into Valhalla, where you will spend your eternity in feasts and battle and may.. may.." Gobber faltered, a cry stuck in his throat.

"And may you be remembered as the great hero, chief.." Snotlout, of all people, continued.

"Father.." he added.

"Husband.." his mother continued.

"Inspiration.." Astrid joined.

"And friend to us all. Sail away into Valhalla and forget the sorrows of this world." Gobber finished.

It was silent for a moment, the wind seems to have stopped as to not disturb the farewell of this man. The crackling of the flames was all that could be heard. He heard quite singing coming from behind him.

"_...Sail on savage seas..." _it went, almost to quiet to hear.

He looked on at the dancing flames, their swirling patterns carrying his father to the heavens.

"_...Ride the waves of life..." _

The singing grew louder, but only slightly the tone still mournful and slow, as Gobber's joined his mother's voice.

He knelt, and said his own private prayer to the gods above and below.

"_...Can stop me on my journey..." _

The beach was still, but for the flickering shadows of the onlookers and the moving lips. More voices joined the sorrowful tune.

"_...I've no need for mighty deeds..." _the voices went on.

"_...When I feel your arms around me..."_

He joined his voices to the rest. The final few onlookers joined their voices to the tune, still it was slow and sad.

"_.. I have no use for rings of gold, I care not for your poetry..."
_

The voices went. He looked back at the fire, and it looked back. His voice left him for a second. The form of Stoick the Vast was swaying in the flames, made of yellows and oranges and whites, it looked at his son and he looked back.

"_...I only want you near me!..." _

His mother's voice dropped from the singing.

"I'll never be the chief you want me to be... I can't" He told the flames.

His mother put her hand on his shoulders, "You have the heart of a chief but the soul of a dragon," She whispered, "You'll be the best chief Berk has ever seen."

She hugged him, from behind her shoulder he could see the Stoick-flame give him a small nod.

"_...For the dancing and the dreaming..." _

He rose to his feet and joined his voice back to the singing.

"_I'll swim and sail on savage seas,_

and ne'er a fear of drowning,

and gladly ride the waves of life,

_if you will marry me..." _

Astrid came near him and put her arms around him. Hiccup wept bittersweet tears as the fires slowly died out.

* * *

><p>Please write your honest review, if you have time please tell me how I can improve my writing, _Constructive _criticism is appreciated. **

~Thank You

2. Chapter 2

Chapter 2 is up! It took me a lot longer to write this chapter, but it is almost four times the length of the first chapter.

Thank you everyone who followed and Favorited the story.

Thanks to the following users for their reviews: lorde, deepmank, Riverat73 and Shangratiger101.

**Special thanks to u/Skyblacker on Reddit for his help with improving my dialogue. **

Anyway, enjoy.

* * *

><p>Chapter 2: Flight of the Valkyries

The moon was already high above them when the flames died out. Hiccup was sitting on the frozen gravel beach, looking out to sea. Astrid was asleep, her head resting on his shoulder, her blond braid coming loose. It was silent, except for the sound of Gobber skipping stones out into the freezing water. Most of the small group of vikings seemed to be in various states of slumber. In the corner of his vision, Hiccup could see the massive girth of Fishlegs snoring a few feet away from him. Eret was laying on his back seemingly looking up at the stars. Snotlout and the twins were huddled around a makeshift fire, more smoldering coals than a burning flame. His mother was sitting cross-legged near the shore, away from everyone. Everything seemed just.. peaceful.

A splashing sound made him snap back from the edge of sleep. He shivered from the cold, where's Toothless when you need him he thought to himself. "Toothless!" Hiccup yelled, suddenly remembering

the events of the past day. Astrid snapped awake at his shout, his mother turned to look at him. "I've got to find him.. we have to make this right!" He whispered.

"Aye we do!" Gobber all but shouted, hearing what Hiccup has said, "When I ge' ma hands.. well hand, on Drago Bloodface, or wha'ever his gods-forsaken name is!"

"I hate to break it to you all, but without dragons, how can we get back?" Astrid asked as she broke free of her sleepy daze.

"Even if we had dragons, that Loki's-son's bewilderbeast would just take control of them." Eret said, dropping in on the conversation.

"Well, e's got ye the'a." The blacksmith added.

Hiccup stood silently for a moment, facing Gobber, a desperate look in the young man's face. "There has got to be a way, I mean, every dragon has a weakness. Right?" He said.

"They all do," Valka whispered in her awe-inspiring voice, "The Alpha cannot control all dragons."

From her Isolated position Val locked gazes with Hiccup, their green eyes meeting as the meaning of her words dawned on the youth. "The babies." He said, the whisper passing over everyone unheard. He made a slight nod of his head towards his mother, his eyes glimmering with hope.

"I know that look." Astrid piped in with a smirk, "You're about to do something stupid aren't you?"

"Not stupid," He replied, "just crazy."

"Even better" she said as Hiccup helped her to her feet.

Valka got up and began walking inland from the shore. "This way, come." she said, leading them to an entrance into the near-empty nest. Gobber hobbled after Hiccup and Astrid as they followed Valka, and as they passed Eret, the stargazing man jumped up and walked by Gobber, the larger man eyeing the former dragon hunter with distrust. "Are ye sure we can trust tha' unimag'ntly named rogue?" Gobber asked those in front of him.

"who y'calling 'unimaginatively named'" The man in question retorted.

"well, le' just say Eret senior was no' one for thinkin' up new names." The viking quipped.

Hiccup just shook his head and ignored the duo.

Fishlegs seemed to have woken up and joined the group. As the six walked by the dozing Snotlout and the Thorston twins, they quickly nudged them awake and told them to follow. The three half sleeping vikings obliged but not before a few calls of "five more minutes!" from the male twin.

The vikings followed Valka in silence for a while, everyone but

Hiccup and Gobber giving the formerly estranged mother a wide berth, not knowing how to react to this turn of events. After a few more minutes of this silence, it seemed Snotlout had enough. "Can somebody tell me what in Thor's name are we doing?" Hiccup's cousin asked loudly.

"umm.. Hiccup, for once I'm with Snotlout." Fishlegs affirmed.

Hiccup slowed to a halt facing the rest, save for his mother that was standing close behind his, as though to provide support. "The Alpha that was living in this nest, the one helping us, it couldn't control the baby dragons." Hiccup told them, "I'm hoping the new Alpha wouldn't be able to either, and that we'll be able to ride the hatchlings to Berk."

"Aye he is right," Valka added in support of her son, a half-smile on her face, "The young ones rarely listen to anyone."

"So why should they listen to us?" Astrid asked as-a-matter-of-factly.

"This is me you're talking about Astrid," Hiccup said in a sudden lighthearted tone, "Dragon master and all that."

It was a while before they reached the cave opening. The entrance to the cave wasn't made for humans to get up to on foot, it was made for dragons after all. They had to climb a rough face of the mountain, its rocks and handholds slippery from the ice and snow, the climb treacherous in the dull moonlight. The going was difficult for Hiccup with his prosthetic leg and especially difficult for Gobber, as his left hand prosthetic was a twin-bladed battleaxe and not being much use as a handhold.

Hiccup reached the top of the steep mountainside, the others were waiting by the entrance to the cavern. He pulled himself up to the ledge, standing up and panting deeply. "This was much easier last time." He said.

"Well, last time ye we're riding a dragon." Gobber said, "And so was I." he added as he twisted, cracking his back.

His mother suddenly piped up, "We should go," she said, "there's no time to waste."

They walked forward, Hiccup and Gobber following closely behind Valka. The others were looking around, trying to orientate themselves in the new surroundings. As they got further and further away from the entrance, it grew ever darker, almost pitch black at one point. Eventually a bright yellow light greeted them.

Bio-luminescent mushrooms grew from the ceiling, casting a warm yellow glow on the lived-in cave. Around the cave were crude furniture made of wood, rough desks and chairs, woven reed baskets and shelves holding a variety of clay bowls and cups. There were smooth stones scattered around a firepit. The fire was extinguished, the ashes freezing cold, yet the heat remained. Through the dim light a falling water could be heard, as well as the cries and squawks of dragons in distress

They followed Valka through a curving passageways until they were met with the vast, wide expanse of the inner nest. The claustrophobic passages opened up to the massive open space of the mountain's interior. The moonlight that managed to get past the ice illuminated the massive grass valleys and canyons and glittered off of the numerous waterfalls that fell to where the Alpha would nest. The vikings marveled at the sight of the nest as they walked in, the dancing moonlight and uneven mushroom lighting giving the place a magnificent otherworldly hue. "Is this what valhalla looks like?" Ruffnut exclaimed in her hoarse voice.

"I'm all for staying here guys." The male twin announced, "Really!"

The fruitless remarks of the twins were, like the very often are, passed over and ignored by most, yet the remarks managed to get Astrid to shake her head silently.

As Hiccup's mother exited the caverns and onto the ledge overlooking the valley, her hair looking more dark brown then auburn in the dim light, a flurry of colour overtook her as she was leaped upon by a hoard of baby dragons, each attracted to the familiar face. From the shadows around the ledge emerged older, adult dragons, all of them suffering from injuries brought upon them long ago. Valka went up to the injured dragons and talked to them reassuringly, like greeting an old friend.

"How are they still here" Snotlout asked, pointing his arm at the adult dragons, "I thought the Alpha has taken them all."

"These ones can't fly." Hiccup answered.

"That must mean the Alpha has a range!" Astrid exclaimed, "Or else the dragons would be a lot more aggressive."

"Astrid's right." Valka spoke up, "The Alpha's have a range, after you get a league away the bewilderbeast's hold starts to wane."

It took them little time to gain the trust of the young dragons, the babies happy to see any kind face when their parents are away. The Vikings made makeshift saddles from spare rope they found in Valka's hideout. Getting the saddles on the baby dragons was a challenge. True to their nature, the hatchlings did not listen to anyone, not for long anyway. Eventually Hiccup got the young dragons to listen, and the vikings got on.

Even though they were just babies, they were large enough to easily support even Gobber's overwhelming girth, and soon they were flying up in the air with a flurry of colours and a barrage of squawking sounds. The dragons were all different colours, yet they were all of the same breed, a sort of gigantic terrible-terror, Large heads and thin wings.

They flew around giant ledges of ice and snow, quickly weaving and ducking around the obstacles. The vikings were hard-fought to control their dragons, causing quite a few collisions. Hiccup rode his dragon with more success than most. He flew through the ice and snow, dodging both dragons and ice until the light of dawn could be seen protruding through the thinner parts of the ice. Behind him, he could hear a rustling of fresh snow being disturbed and then a shout of

"I'm hurt! I am very much hurt!" from Tuffnut as the drama-seeking viking hurried to get on his dragon.

The brightening light of the rising sun greeted them as they left the caverns. Hiccup took lead and flew his dragon to the front of the flock. He turned and circled around the island, the others following him, until the sun was at his back. Astrid flew up behind him, coming in level with him. "We're going home." she said dreamily

"If there's still a home to go to." He said in a half sarcastic tone.

The flight over the near frozen sea was uneventful, the dragons stuck on a straight course and carried their riders off to their target. The calm weather and the unchanging surrounding allowed Hiccup's mind to wander, the events of the past few days spiraled in his mind, emotions appearing and disappearing wildly. The sight of Astrid flying by him, her braid came fully undone and her hair now streaming in the wind, glittering like golden waves, comforted him as he flew.

The sun was high by the time Hiccup saw Berk appear over the horizon. The vikings stared at the scene before them. An armada of ships was in harbour, laid in anchor well away from the dock at Berk, almost all of them manned only by a skeleton crew. The docks on the lower parts of the cliffs that made up Berk was covered in massive spears of ice, as was several other parts of the village. Dragons of all types nested all over the island, a flurry of colour decorated the island in a rainbow of toxic hues.

They lowered their altitude and flew closer to the sea as they neared the island. Hiccup saw the people in the village now. They were different, they didn't look like any viking he has ever seen. Their shoulders were less broad and the kite shields that some of them carried did not resemble anything that anyone on Berk has ever used. "Drago's men!" Astrid exclaimed behind him.

"Let's show that bastard what we've made of!" Gobber shouted waving his axe-hand over his head..

"Sure, let's just fly in there, loudly announce ourselves and hope the Alpha is not at home." Hiccup said darkly.

"YEAH!" shouted the twins in unison.

"Wait, you're kidding..." Ruffnut then said, their expressions turning a tad sadder for a split second.

A glimmer of movement caught Hiccup's eye, he turned his head and saw a pair of vikings on a small fishing boat waving their arms at them, urging them to come forward. One of them was short and stubby, with brown hair and beard, the other was taller and blond haired, on that one's head was a bucket firmly set.

"Hey, that's Bucket and Mulch!" Gobber said.

"Let's go down to them, we need to know what's going on." Hiccup told them.

They went down and hovered by the ship, the wind from the dragons'

wings stirring up waves in the cold water. "Thank the gods you're back!" the shorter man, Mulch exclaimed, "But where is chief Stoick? And who are they?" He added a moment later.

"They a'e a long story," Gobber quickly answered, seeing the darkening look go up upon Hiccup's face, "Stoick... he didn't.."

"He's gone." Astrid finished quietly.

The two fishermen grew silent, until the taller one, Bucket, blurted out, "Where's he gone off to." This earned the dull man a sharp elbow to the side, which made Hiccup's words snap inside his bucket-covered man, "Oh.." He said.

"I'm sorry lad." Mulch said to Hiccup.

"It's alright we gave him a good funeral." Hiccup's expression hardened, "Where is the rest of the tribe? Did everyone make it out alive?"

"Most people did, some were lost covering our retreat." The short man answered, "Who is that madman? Why is he riding Toothless? And what in Thor's name is that Loki-cursed massive beast."

"That madman is Drago Bludfist," Valka spoke up grimly, "He is the one who killed Stoick, he controls the bewilderbeast, and it controls the other."

"Aye, we thought he controlled the dragons somehow, at least those who didn't get away in time." Mulch replied.

Hiccup suddenly spoke up "Wait you were able to get some dragons away on times?" How did you have enough time?"

"You're going to have to ask Gustav, he is one of your students right?" The short viking said, "He was able to take control of a few dragons and help us get the tribe to the beach caves."

"We need to get to the caves then." Astrid piped up, "If he found out a way to wrest away the Alpha's control..."

"Astrid's right." Hiccup said, "Bucket, Mulch, we will fly to the caves, thank you for this, be safe don't get caught."

The flight to the caves was short. As they neared the hidden beach where the caves were located, they were greeted with equal parts joy and interrogation. Questions about everything were being shot at them, Hiccup tried to answer them as quickly as possible, but to no avail. Suddenly, an adolescent voice spoke up, "Hiccup what happened, who was that riding Toothless?" Gustav said.

Gustav was fifteen years of age, and one of the most gifted dragon riders Hiccup taught. He resembled Snotlout in a way, but was a little less stocky and looked as if he would grow to be much taller. He wore a horned helmet, like most vikings, braids of black hair were hanging down from inside it. The adolescent had green eyes, a shade more striking than Hiccup's. Unlike more vikings though, Gustav was a lot more quick, both with wit and with movement, and this allowed him to quickly weave through the crowd and get up close to Hiccup.

A shout from Gobber quitted the bumbling crowd. "Right then. let the lad speak." he said.

"The man who attacked the village is Drago Bludfist, he is a slaver and a madman. He can control the dragons and.. and he killed my dad." Hiccup spoke to the assembled vikings in a melancholy tone. The crowd erupted into shouts of "WHAT!" and "Stoick? It can't be!"

As the crowd quieted down, Hiccup spoke up again. "Gustav, Bucket and Mulch said you found a way to stop the dragon's being controlled, can you show me."

"oh yes," the teenager muttered, "follow me."

Gustav lead Hiccup to one of the caves, Astrid and his mother following alongside him through the damp sand. As they rounded a corner a group of dragons lay sleeping before them. There were three nightmares, two zipplebacks and a single nadder and gronkle were lying on the floor, white cloth wrapped around their heads, covering their scaly, elongated ears.

"I covered their ears so the large dragon can't control them." Gustav said. The three older vikings looked at him with a slight confusion.

"As we got closer to the large dragon.." Gustav started.

"The bewilderbeast." Valka added, causing the young viking to place a questioning gaze on her, then to Hiccup as though saying who is this.

"This is my mother, it's a long time right now to explain everything." Hiccup told Gustav.

"Okay, so as I was saying, as we got closer to the bewilderbeast, or as it got closer to us, I noticed a strange hum in the air and the dragons got more and more agitated, I think this is how the dragon controls the others, a sort of annoying buzz." Gustav explained, "I was able to cover a few dragons' ears to get them away."

"That would explain why the Alpha has a range." Valka mused.

At that moment a group of vikings headed by Gobber and Spitelout, Snotlout's father and Stoick's brother entered the room. In the group were the twins, Snotlout, Fishlegs and Eret as well as members of what was the tribe's war council. "We are ready to stand by you Hiccup." Spitelout said in a gruff tone, putting his fist over his heart. The older man's eyes landed on Valka. "Is that you Valka? we thought you were dead, did Stoick know before..."

"Yes." She answered simply and quietly.

Spitelout was less broader in the chest than Stoick, there was a reason the chief was called 'Stoick the Vast', but he was still muscular and powerful. hiccup's uncle had dark black hair as opposed to his fathers fiery red mane, and Spitelout's beard was a lot shorter and neatly trimmed, grey hairs starting to show on it. He wore armour made out of studded leather and chainmail, making him look ready for things to come.

"You are the chief now lad." Spitelout said, "we will follow you."

"We are ready to fight, to kill those sons-of-Loki that decided to attack our home!" another viking shouted from behind Spitelout.

"But I am no warrior, I can't fight worth a damn." Hiccup argued.

"We a'e not askin' ye ta fight, just ta lead." Gobber rebutted, "An' ye won't be alone."

"As long as I'm not the only one making the calls," Hiccup said, "Tell me everything you know about where Drago's forces are."

Gustav was the one that spoke up. "The scouting we did showed that they are keeping a lot of the dragons in the pens in the academy, Drago's men are scattered all over town." The youth said.

"What the boy says is right." Another viking spoke up.

"The bewilderbeast is submerged underwater in the harbour." Gustav added. "Drago took the chief's house at the top of the hill for himself, Toothless was seen near it on our scouting run."

"Okay," Hiccup said, "We need to get our dragons back first, to have any chance in this, Do we know how many soldiers Drago has?"

"We counted thirty ships, about fifty soldiers per ship..."

one thousand five hundred men." Astrid finished for the older man, "while we have how many able to fight, four hundred? five?"

"No lass, three hundred at the most."

"Okay, so now we really need the dragons to listen to us." Hiccup said.

He thought for a moment, then spoke up. "We need a distraction, something to lead Drago's men away from the Dragons."

Ruffnut and Tuffnut both shot their hands up, their long almost silver hair swinging up wildly, their enthusiasm bringing a smirk to Hiccup's face.

"Aye, pu' these devils on one of them zipplebacks and ye go' yeer distraction." Gobber quipped.

The rest of the planning passed over smoothly, the orders being relayed to the fighters waiting outside that cave. The attack was planned for one hour after midnight, when it was hoped there would be the least moonlight. It was at sunset when Hiccup and Astrid found themselves sitting together, looking out at the waning orange glow on the horizon.

Hiccup held her hand on his lap, Astrid leaning on Hiccup's side. "You know," Astrid suddenly piped up, "this reminds me when we watched the ships sail away before we went to fight the Red Death. Your crazy plan hatched and then you began to worry." She looked at

Hiccup's sullen face, "My point is, you managed to save the entire tribe five years ago, almost by yourself, and you'll do it again tonight, only we will all be with you."

"I know, but I can't shake the feeling that things will go wrong, especially now." He said.

Astrid wrapped one of her arms around him in a hug. "Hiccup.. if anything happens, we'll face it together, always." She said softly, pulling him in tight. Hiccup returned her embrace, the two held each other closely as the last light of day faded away.

The thin crescent moon peaked up over the ocean and shone its dull silver light at the two young moon slowly rose higher over the still water, the movement on the beach stilled to a minimum. Most people were sleeping in the caves. A few of the more restless viking were fidgeting, finding things to do. Some were sharpening weapons to a fine edge, others were checking their armour for the dozenth time, all anxious for the upcoming attack.

Eventually, the position of the moon indicated the time for the attack was soon. Hiccup got up, helped to his feet by Astrid, and the two made their way in a brisk pace to where Gustav had the dragons saddled up. only four of the dragons were fit to fly, the others wounded from the retreat, there were two Nightmares and a Nadder lined up near Gustav. The two got on the nadder, its scales green and grey. Valka looked to Hiccup from her seat on one of the Nightmare, the fearsome dragon looking alert and ready for battle, its purple and yellow scale glittering dimly in the faint moonlight. Fishlegs and Eret were riding tandem on the other nightmare.

"The twins already took a zippleback and are flying by the warriors on their way to the village." Gustav told them, the youth being one of the people staying behind to care for the wounded dragons and those who couldn't fight. Gobber and Snotlout, Hiccup knew, were with the warriors attacking Drago's men by foot.

"Okay!" Hiccup shouted as they were all mounted, "We need to open the dragon pens and cover their ears so their riders can get to them, fly quickly, work quickly and keep your dragons' ears covered!"

The mounted vikings rose up in the air, the two Nightmares and the Nadder stirring up the sand beneath them in a swirl of particulates. Hiccup held onto Astrid's back and shoulders as the dragon beat its way into the night sky. The three dragons flew up in an arrow formation, Hiccup and Astrid's nadder at the head of the triangle. It was not to long until the dragon-riders had a layer of clouds between them and the ground, and proceeded with unsurpassed stealth.

The frigid wind beat at Hiccup's and Astrid's face, numbing their lips and flushing their cheeks with red. It was not long before the nadder and the nightmares separated. Valka and Eret, Fishlegs started descending, veering to another direction to get to the dragon academy. Astrid and Hiccup flew onwards for a while longer before they started with their descent.

As they passed the clouds the sight of the village made Hiccup let out a gasp. There were fires burning on many of the thatch roofs, illuminating the scene below, yet night-blinding the warriors on the ground. The Berkian fighters were clumped together in a narrow

street, their wooden shields covered with damp cloth and put up in a shield wall. This was the first time the vikings had to fight dragons in years, it was hard to go back to the old ways, especially as some of the dragons were their own. The vikings in battle did as little as they could to harm the scaled beasts, yet the dragon-fire came forth and licked at their shields.

"By the name of Odin.." Hiccup whispered as the scene became clear to his eyes.

"Yeah." Astrid all but squeaked.

Drago's soldiers were in a disorganized mess, all running from cover from what seemed like equal parts catapult fire and zippleback explosions. Thank Thor for the twins, or is it Loki I should be thanking, Hiccup thought.

"We need to hurry!" Astrid spoke up, breaking Hiccup's concentration on the ongoing fighting. The nadder veered off and flew past the main plaza and up through the main street leading up the the chief's house. Hiccup jumped off the nadder as soon as its feet touched the roof of the house.

"Good luck." Astrid said, "I'll meet you later."

"you too." He whispered longingly as she flew away.

Hiccup stood atop the roof of his house, fighting hard to keep his balance. He went down on his hands and knees and scrambled up to where he roof gave out to a square opening from where smoke would usually be coming through. He opened it up and looked inside. The house was empty, or so it first seemed. A flicker of movement brought his eyes on Toothless, curled up like a black ball in the shadows, breathing in and out slowly, his saddle and tail-fin still on. The nightfury's eyes were closed, looking like it was sleeping.

Hiccup pulled himself down through the smoke-hall, and dropped onto the second story ledge that his bedroom was located on. As he landed on the hard wooden floor, his prosthetic leg slipped and gave out, making him fall down on arms and knees. He got up carefully cursing his clumsy movement. He made his way to the lower level, silently creeping down the steps, or as silently as his metal leg permitted.

He got down the stairs, his heart beating in his chest, and went closer to the sleeping form of Toothless, slowly unwinding a piece of cloth he had around his belt. Hiccup got near enough to Toothless that the dragons hot breath warmed his face, he finally got the cloth unwound from his belt, when an aggressive voice spoke up behind him, startling him and sending a chill through his spine.

"You have guts, coming back boy!" Drago Bludfist hoarsely spoke in his menacing voice, "I don't know what you hope to accomplish."

Hiccup glared at the cloaked man, his long staff held in his one hand. "I got your little lizard in my palm, and this time your father can't take the shot for you..." Drago threatened. The man advanced at Hiccup, his staff in his outstretched arm. Hiccup drew his sword in his left hand, pushing the bottom of the hilt and igniting the sword.

The bright firelight illuminated the cold room in a vibrant, moving glow. He pointed the sword at Drago, keeping the cloth in his right hand well away from the fire.

"So you want to play then," The dragon conqueror growled, "well lets play!"

The large man swung the staff in a vertical motion at Hiccup's head. Hiccup dodged out of the way. He swung his flaming sword sideways at the Drago, the large man parrying it with his staff, a little flame jumping from the blade to the pole-arm, then quickly extinguishing itself. The two exchanged strikes, neither landing a blow. Sweat beaded on Hiccup's brow as he dodged and parried blow after blow his sword feeling evermore heavy in his arm. The two kept swinging at one another, Hiccup's blazing blade was a blur of light in the young man's hands, while Drago's crude staff a long reaching tongue lashing at the smaller reality of the situation dawned upon him; he, Hiccup was fighting a ruthless killer twice his size with no sign that the beast of a man was tiring.

Hiccup dodged another strike at his head and put his sword up, holding it with two hands. He kept the point of the blade pointed at Drago, its flame slowly dying out. "Had enough!" The large man yelled. Hiccup grunted with desperation and lunged at the cloaked man, attempting to skewer the man. He unbalanced himself, and the beast of the man took his chance and hit the sword out of Hiccup's arms. Hiccup lay sprawled on the floor and scrambled to his feet. A hit into his stomach brought him back down onto his back and a savage foot on his chest kept him there.

"I could kill you right now," The savage man said, "but that would be a real shame".

The large man brought the staff to Hiccup's neck, then halted. Drago hit the staff against the floor thrice, and the still form of Toothless stirred and got up from behind Drago. The dragon's contracted pupils looked intimidating even in the dim light. The savage man gestured at Hiccup with his staff as he moved further and further back away.

Hiccup faced the advancing Toothless, and scrambled up into a sitting position before the dragon's face was thrust up close to him. The pale green eyes of the dragon engulfed Hiccup's world, they revealed no emotion, they might as well have been carved of stone. The dragon's gaze turned more aggressive and a growl rumbled from his throat, teeth bared.

"Toothless, come on, don't let that... madman tell you what to do." Hiccup whispered, his voice feeble with equal parts sadness and anticipation.

His words fell on deaf ears as the growl turned more into a snarl. "Come on you damn lizard! KILL HIM!" Drago shouted. A high pitch sound began in Toothless's throat, slowly building up in its intensity. "Toothless's please, I.. I..." Hiccup sighed, "I need you bud." The heat radiated from the dragon's throat and as he opened his jaws slightly, a blue glow lit up Hiccup's face. Hiccup closed his eyes and reached out his arm to Toothless. "It's not your fault, I'm sorry Toothless." Hiccup waited for the fiery blast of superheated air that was to come from the dragon's infernal maw.

The fire did not come.

Hiccup warily opened his eyes to see Toothless smacking his lips, as though he swallowed an unusually nasty fish. The dragon's eyes looked at Hiccup with a mixture of confusion and gladness, like a cat looking at a mysterious container, wanting to know what's inside. Hiccup let out the breath he didn't realise he was holding, and smiled slightly as Toothless placed his snout into Hiccup's outstretched hand, a sort of 'I'm back' from the dragon. "Good to have you back bud." Hiccup whispered, his voice catching in his throat.

Their moment was broken when a yell from behind Toothless shouted "Get on with it you useless newt!"

"Come on Tooth, let's do this." Hiccup whispered into Toothless's ears.

Hiccup got hold of Toothless's head and quickly jumped up onto the saddle, instinctively locking his foot in place inside the mechanism in the saddle's stirrup. Toothless quickly spun around, shooting a ball of plasma at Drago, the large man having barely enough time to cover himself with his cloak as he leaped out of the way. Toothless leaped off of a table and through the door, flapping his large wings as he did so. Hiccup clicked the tail-fin into position and Toothless rose into the air, as fast as only a nightfury could. They were above the town in no time, and the scene they were met with was not reassuring.

Fires were burning around the village, turning many houses into piles of ash and rubble. There were hoards of other dragons flying in the air, many of which had the metal armor that Drago's men put on the enslaved beasts. The fighting on the ground has not changed much, the Berkian vikings were in a shield wall, seemingly gained ground against the spear-wielding, kite-shielded invaders, yet the fighting looked savage and bloody. The only reassuring factor of the battle were the dragon riders. There was a plethora of dragons flying with vikings on their backs and cloth around their heads. The viking-backed dragons were fighting tooth, fire and claw against the armoured breasts, pushing them back towards the sea. Many of the riders were also working hard to support the warriors on the ground, raining fire and stones on the heads of Drago's soldiers.

Hiccup guided Toothless to the right, moving into a formation of dragon riders. It was headed by a slender, blue-armoured figure riding a four-winged dragon. Hiccup pulled the visor of his helmet down to cover his face, keeping the cold air from numbing it, and flew Toothless to fly beside the four-winged dragon. He nodded to his mother atop the dragon and received a similar greeting, her face covered by her horned helmet.

The dragon formation dove down on top of the enemy soldiers below, and brought fire down on them. Hiccup and Toothless added their blasts to the awe-inspiring blaze, the screams of the burning men and the sickly sweet smell of burning flesh made Hiccup feel queasy. The dragons rose up again and made a sweep around the battle, and they were met with a group of armored dragons, charging at them head on. Toothless rose higher in the air, using his superior speed and maneuverability to get out of the thick fighting. "Okay bud," Hiccup

whispered to Toothless, "fly and shoot. Fly. And. Shoot."

The two flanked the armored dragons and shot highly accurate, explosive shots, lighting them up with a vicious purple colour. Two armoured dragons fled from the group, the membranes on their wings smoking slightly. Toothless dodged several fires aimed at him with ease, then shot another burst into the fray. This dogfight continued for a few minutes until the armored dragons either fled or fell. A nadder rider and two gronkle riders had to leave the fray because of their dragon's injuries or fatigue.

The battle continued. The Armoured dragons were slowly fought off, not having the extra help and guidance of a rider, they were susceptible to flanking and attacks from blind spots. The fighting on the ground was swinging in the favour of the Berkian fighters, the lines of the kite-shielded invaders faltering. The riders were increasing their attacks on the ground troops, spreading fire and stone, and in some rare cases boiling acid, on top of them.

Then suddenly the lines of Drago's men broke, the soldiers turned and ran from the Berkian warriors and dragons. Toothless turned his head towards Hiccup and gave him a look as if to say "What now?"

"I don't know bud."

The vikings began to give chase to the fleeing soldiers, until what looked like Spitelout and Gobber reigned them back in, and back into formation. Cheering erupted on the ground, friends running to friends, fathers to sons, shieldmaidens to their fathers and brothers, celebrating the victory. The dragons in the sky were doing the same, spread around the sky in small groups. Hiccup and Toothless were on their own, circling in the sky, a feeling of uneasy relief on their minds.

A thundering roar broke apart the cheering and plunged the battlefield into silence. The dragons in the sky went wild, screeching and swirling to get away from the hellish sound, even as the control over them was broken, a fear inside of them lingered. Hiccup could hear an almost to quiet rumbling, and as it began many of the dragons flying began to flee from the bewilderbeast. Toothless began to twitch beneath Hiccup, his head moving from side to side, as though to shake off a particularly nasty bug off his face.

"Come on Tooth.." Hiccup said reassuringly, "don't let him take you back."

Grunts and whimpers came from Toothless, his thrashing head made his whole body fling around, causing Hiccup to hold on tighter to the saddle. "Come on bud." Hiccup whispered into the dragon's ears. It seemed to Hiccup that the near subsonic rumbling intensified, attempting to pull Toothless's mind away from him. Toothless let out a terrible roar and blasted a ball of plasma into the night air. His head snapped still.

Toothless turned his head towards Hiccup, his eyes aggressive, but a familiar look on his face, "I'm okay," The gaze seemed to say. Toothless shook his head, as though clearing his mind. The scene around them changed. Drago's men were all gone from the streets of Berk, from Hiccup's position he could see many rowboats fleeing towards the docked ships. The Warriors of Berk went back into their

shield formations, lining up on the edge of the buildings near a grassy clearing that overlooked the docks. Many of the dragons that were in the air, fled further and further inland, as far away from the Alpha as they could. A handful of dragons started flying towards the lined up vikings, ready to aid them. At their head was Valka, armored in blue and on top of Cloudjumper, her four-winged dragon.

The towering figure of the bewilderbeast loomed over everyone. The massive dragon was standing in the water below the cliff face, its feet on the seafloor but its face still managed to rise over the highest building on the ledge.

"DRAGON MASTER!" Drago Bludfist yelled, standing on top of his dragon's gigantic head.

Astrid chose that moment to appear next to Hiccup. She was mounted on Stormfly, her golden hair covered with ash and dirt, as was her face. There was a cut on her cheek, below her eye. She made eye contact with Hiccup, her face was covered with a fearful look.

"DRAGON MASTER!" The shout went again. Hiccup looked forth at the screaming madman. Drago Bludfist had a crazed look on his face, a burn on his good arm, where he wasn't quick enough to dodge Toothless's fire.

"You don't have to do this, not alone." Astrid said to Hiccup.

"I know." He said.

But Hiccup flew off anyway. Toothless's speed was too much for Astrid's nadder to contend with. The flew forth at the titanic dragon, the air around them screeching as Toothless reached his top speed. Toothless pulled up and rose higher into the black sky. Hiccup guided Toothless into a steep dive gaining speed as he neared the massive beast. He came in behind the bewilderbeast, and shot a blast of purple fire as he spread his wings and pulled out of the dive. The Alpha stumbled under the force of the explosion, then swung its head and blew a flurry of frost at Toothless. By that time, Hiccup and Toothless were away from larger dragon.

Toothless dove more times at the dragon, delivering blast after blast and dodging the flurries of frost shot at him. Toothless shot his sixths blast at the dragon, the great beast now bruised and bleeding from several wounds the blasts managed to inflict. "Okay bud, let's give you time to charge up." Astrid was finally close enough to harm the bewilderbeast, yet the Alpha strengthened its rumbling and Stormfly was forced to land. Toothless pulled up, but too late to see the Alpha swing its tusk at him.

The tusks hit Toothless flush on the soft underbelly, luckily with their sides and not the point. The nightfury was hit backwards and Hiccup knocked off, hearing the shouts of worry from the onlookers on the ground. Toothless's leather tail-fin becoming stuck in a position for climbing altitude. As Hiccup got past the daze of, he pulled on two strings on his thighs and opened up his gliding suit. Toothless was spiraling down, out of control. A blast of frost streamed past Hiccup, and hit Toothless in the tail, freezing the prosthetic, the falling nightfury now almost completely immobile in the air.

Hiccup manage to slow himself down while in the air, but he landed hard on the ground. Toothless on the other hand, landed on the ground with only a slight a thump. The black dragon got up, shook his head and snorted. Hiccup saw all this unfold through a dazed gaze, his body feeling hurt and tired. All around him it seemed, dragons were being forced to cower into submission, all of them gazing down in a forced bow. All but Toothless

Two figures ran towards him and knelt down over his body. Valka and Astrid stood over him, Astrid cradling his head in her lap. "Hiccup, are you okay!?" She asked forcefully.

"I just fell out of the sky, but other than that, I'm all dandy." He answered hoarsely.

"Oh Hiccup.." His mother whispered.

Just then, He saw the looming figure of the Alpha breath in a gasp of air. Knowing what was to come, Hiccup opened his mouth to warn his mother and Astrid, but no words would come out. The world was a blur, the white blast of frost headed towards them, he heard Astrid gasp as she realised what was happening. A black blur bounded in front of them, and Toothless spread his long wings, covering them. Toothless blasted the freezing flurry, making it miss them.

As the frozen storm abated, Toothless bounded up to the ledge of the cliff, away from the huddled viking, a look of determination on his face. He shot at the large dragon's face, purple explosions blasting the beast. Small fires ignited on the small hairs on the Alpha's face, making it shake his head in pain. Toothless fired shot after shot at the beast, the Alpha attempting to fight back, yet it could not open its mouth in fear of the super-heated blasts to enter it.

"Fight you beast!" Drago screamed from atop of the Alpha, then proceeding to twirl his staff and shout his growls.

Toothless shot his sixths shot at the Alpha. He then shot again, and then another. Hiccup stared at his dragon in awe, not knowing where this fury has come from. After every shot Toothless fired, The scales on his back began to shine evermore blue. The nightfury kept firing, a look of pain on his face, a look that looked increasingly more so after every blast. A few more shots and the Alpha began roaring in pain, its white scales blackened and burned, blood streaming down through open wounds.

The saddle on Toothless's back caught on fire and fell off as it burned and realization dawned on Hiccup. "Stop him!" He screamed in a pained and worried voice, "He's burning himself up!" He attempted to get up and get to his friend, but his body was too weak and tired. Toothless gave Hiccup a look, as if to say, "I know what I'm doing" and continued to slowly fire on the Alpha.

Suddenly the subdued dragons around Hiccup seemed to gain control of their minds again. The glided towards Toothless and added their fire to his blasts. The Alpha was now covered with a myriad of brightly coloured flames, it began to falter.

The fires of all the dragons lit up the night time battle, illuminating the epic scene for all the vikings, now no longer in a

shield formation, standing by the building behind the clearing this was occurring on.

All of a sudden, the Alpha turned and ran, or more accurately swam, away with Drago on his head. The bewilderbeast was burned and bleeding. It was wounded and fearful, it seemed not even Drago's control over it could stop its escape. It submerged fully far from land, as the dragons chasing it gave up and flew back to the island. It seemed that Drago was on it when it submerged but his men have picked him up as they rowed to their ships.

"Don't chase them." Astrid said, taking control of the situation, "It's not worth it."

Hiccup's arm and chest hurt and he was just now becoming aware of the cuts and bruises all over his body. Stillness engulfed the clearing as their victory dawned on them, up until the point when the viking warriors and riders began cheering. He saw Astrid's face, a slight smile on her face, "You did it." she whispered to him, and his mother nodded in agreement.

"No," Hiccup said, "Toothless won it for us."

The aforementioned dragon stumbled up to Hiccup and lay down next to the young viking, curling up Hiccup in his wings, almost like a hug. Hiccup felt the hot scales of the dragon next to him, and rubbed Toothless's chin as he found it. "Thank you bud." He said in a tired voice. Toothless looked at Hiccup and gave him an affectionate stare, then the dragon cooed and pulled Hiccup closer to him, not wanting to leave the rider's side.

It was at that point that Hiccup realized he hasn't slept in three days. He closed his eyes and hugged Toothless's side.

* * *

><p>Thanks for reading.

Honest opinions and constructive criticism are always welcome.

**~Shonstantin **

3. Chapter 3

Sorry** for the slight delay in the posting of this chapter.**

Thank you to all those that followed, reviewed and Favorited "Dances and Dreams", I really appreciate it.

Anyways, enjoy.

* * *

><p>Chapter 3: A New Dawn

Hiccup sat on the edge of a sea-stack overlooking the roaring surf below. The large limestone pillar on which he sat on was barren,

besides a thin layer of moss on top of the stone. Toothless was curled up behind him, the black dragon's head looking at the still dark horizon, patiently awaiting the upcoming dawn. Hiccup leaned on Toothless's side and gazed off into the distance, finally a moment's rest.

It was a week since they defeated Drago and his bewilderbeast, and things seemed to finally be getting back to normal; or as normal as things could be after recent events. The cleanup of the village has taken all that week, the frozen docks were the least of their problems in that regard though. The docks were quickly thawed with dragonfire, in a matter of hours they were cleaned and ready for refurbishment. Many of the village's houses needed to be completely rebuilt, or repaired, a task that had taken the Berkians the whole week and is still ongoing.

The wounds and casualties were an entirely different matter. While the battle was victorious, it was far from bloodless, of the three hundred viking warriors that went off to face the invaders, a third was wounded or dead or dying. Among the injured was Snotlout, having taken the front lines in the battle, he has fought valiantly, but valor and honor are dangerous things on a battlefield. The young viking was still alive, but wounded gravely from the fighting.

The vikings that gave their life for berk have all been given a proper funeral, with Hiccup giving them their funeral rites, it was his first proper action as chief. On the other hand, the soldiers in Drago's army were not given such an honor; the dead invaders were buried in a mass grave in a field far from town.

On the day after the battle, celebrations were bountiful. The mead hall was roaring with laughter and true to its name, mead was flowing like a raging river to the tankards of the merry vikings. As Hiccup walked into the hall in the late morning to break his fast, he was cheered and firmly lifted by Gobber so all could see their chief and saviour. "A' least ye di'nt lose any mo'e limbs this time." The blacksmith said as he hoisted the young man on his spacious shoulder. Hiccup did not feel the urge to partake in most of the merriment that day, causing the soon-to-be-formalised chief to skulk into the shadows with Toothless and quickly finish his meal before surveying the village. He was on Toothless's back most of that day, creating a mental list of tasks that needed to be done, it was not until Astrid forced him to calm down and relax did he let himself stop trying to "be overly 'chiefy'" as she said.

It was only on the next day that the merriment slowed down enough to allow Hiccup, with Gobber's help and guidance, to have the townspeople start the , fortunately, was mostly dealing with tasks that required dragons, or knowledge of dragons, to complete. whether it was melting the frozen docks or relocating the dragons from the arctic nest to dragon island, he found the solace of being on the back of his friend and constant companion, Toothless, reassuring and familiar, more so than hi informal chieftainship.

Valka on the other hand, had 'difficulties' readjusting to life on Berk. It was not easy coming back from twenty years of self imposed exile, and even though her reveal to the people of Berk on the day after the battle sparked nothing but gladness, most did not really know how to react. Her life on Berk before she was taken by Cloudjumper was not ordinary, her respect of dragons in a village of

dragon killers made her a sort of social outcast or taboo, despite Stoick being the chief. Fortunately, with the changed relation between dragons and vikings, her views were now accepted, and it was Freyda the Fierce, Astrid's mother and the closest thing Valka had to a friend before her 'kidnapping', that began to rebuild the bridges between the two. As soon as Hiccup revealed to the village who Valka really was, Freyda was at first bewildered, then ran to Valka and hugged her, apparently the slender woman meant more to Freyda than she thought.

The academy was something that was neglected through the first part of the week, but as progress was made on the village's repairs, many of the dragon riders voiced their opinion that it should be reopened and that Hiccup should go back to instruct them. The most vocal among these were the Thorston twins, which sparked an argument between them and Hiccup, the later claiming that he didn't have the time to instruct them. "Ooh! what if there was two of you!" Tuffnut called out during one of their feuds.

"Unfortunately there aren't, so you are going to have to teach yourselves," Hiccup replied, "unless you have another 'Dragon Master', as you call me, laying around. It was at that point that the realisation struck him and he ran off towards his house, sparking the question of "Was it something I said?" asked from the male twin to the female.

It was announced later that day that Valka would be assisting hiccup in instructing the dragon academy.

The rest of the week ran more or less smoothly; Hiccup and Gobber getting the village to focus on specific tasks, although the larger man was still apparently not the best at diplomacy. "By Thor, if tha plaza is no' repae'd' by sundown, you'll get to see wha' tha view is insayde a dragon!" he would shout pointing at his gronkle, Grump, when a tribesman did not do as instructed. This left quite a bit of fuming vikings for Hiccup to deal with as the evening fell. Despite Gobber's lack of tact, progress was made, and many of the villagers were constantly voicing their opinion that Hiccup should be formally sworn in into his role as chief. Hiccup refused this, using the excuse of not wanting to delay any needed work.

And so it was that Hiccup sitting on the sea-stack, looking at the colours the sunlight made as it rose above the foggy sea. The glimmering reds and yellows looked like flames in a godly forge, or from the torches of the halls of Valhalla. Hiccup let himself imagine his father in the light, feasting besides Thor or fighting the other heroes. A tear left his eye, he sniffed and wiped it off with his sleeves. Toothless's head perked up, sensing his rider's distress, and gave Hiccup a questioning look. "I'm okay bud." He told the dragon, patting his snout reassuringly.

The sun rose higher over the two as they lay in their own little world of calm. It wasn't until a blue nadder flew up and landed next to them did they return to the real world. Both the blue bird-like dragon and its golden haired rider looked glimmering in the morning sunlight. Astrid leapt off of Stormfly, landing smoothly on the mossy stone. Toothless's ears perked up as the sound of company awoke him from his dozing. The black, cat-like dragon got up, nearly causing Hiccup to fall backwards, and stretched his back, then walked up to Stormfly, leaving Astrid to sit by Hiccup.

"So this is where you've been hiding" She calmly said.

"Who said I was hiding." He tried feigning ignorance, a tactic that didn't usually work on Astrid.

Astrid gave him an interrogative look, and then sighed.

"Okay! I might have been hiding." Hiccup said coyly, "But I have a good reason to."

"Hiccup, you can't hide from this." Astrid rebutted sternly, "You are already the chief, it's just a formality."

"But what will this ceremony accomplish?" He asked in reply, "Show everyone how inadequate of a chief I am? I am nothing compared to dad."

Astrid shook her head then put on a reassuring smile, "Hiccup.. your father was a great chief, and he would be the first to tell you that you will be.. "

Hiccup went to interrupt but was hushed by Astrid, "No Hiccup, let me finish. Stoick would have been the first to tell you that you would have been a great chief, better than him in many cases."

"But I'm.." He didn't get to finish his sentence as the blond cut him off.

"No buts Hiccup." She leaned in close to him, "You'll be a great chief, I know it."

"Besides." She added, "It's just a formality."

They sat together in silence for a while, leaning against each other, just watching the surf below and the two dragons fooling around beside them. Toothless and Stormfly have begun a game akin to that of tug-of-war, one of the dragons somehow finding a piece of old twine rope and the two pulling on it, each dragon with a determined yet playful look on their faces. Hiccup smirked as Stormfly was able to sweep Toothless's feet from under him, making the black dragon fall onto his back.

It was not long before Astrid got up and pulled Hiccup to his feet. "Right," She said, "Wouldn't want you late for your induction."

"Yeah." He agreed with a sarcastically defeated tone.

As they got their dragons to stop their antics, they got on and began the short flight to the village. The two flew above the docks, where both viking and dragon were in the final stages working on repairing the warehouses, dry-docks and piers that were damaged by the freezing blast of Drago's bewilderbeast. They landed on the top of the hill that lead up to the chief's house; well, my house now Hiccup thought.

"I guess I'll see you at the ceremony?" He asked Astrid, getting off of Toothless.

"No doubt about it." She answered, still mounted on Stormfly's back.

Hiccup watched her as the light blue dragon flew off with a running start, the way her hair moved when Stormfly did that always mesmerized him. He walked in the opposite direction she flew off, towards his house. It was a short walk before he went through his front door.

The fire was burning warmly inside the pit in the center of the living room, keeping the frigid, late-autumn air out of the house. The smoke was spiralling up and out through the open chimney hole at the top of the roof, reminding Hiccup of how the dragon's moved in the arctic nest. Near the back of the room, lay Cloudjumper, looking out at them as he and Toothless walked in. His mother was sitting on a table, a mess of parchment, quills and inkwells in front of her, and the book of dragons lay open, new pages being edited and filled.

"I see Astrid found you then." Valka said in a happy tone, "I thought you were better at hiding.

"Uhh, yeah." He replied, his hand moving to grasp the back of his neck, "I suppose I need to get ready for my induction?"

Valka just smiled faintly and nodded in reply, a look akin to that of pride spread across her face. Hiccup seemed to straighten up as he noticed this, and walked up the stair to his room with as chiefly a pose he could manage.

It didn't take him long to get dressed for the formalities later that day, but then again, he didn't have a very varied wardrobe. Hiccup wore a forest-green woollen shirt and dark brown leather breeches. He wore a belt made of steel chain-links, with his sword on his right hip. His boots were made of hardened black leather, the regular cold weather footwear. On his back was a fur cloak, made of grey wolf fur, making him look much wider than he actually was, adding to the image of a viking chief. He didn't have his helmet, it was lost some time in the battle against Drago.

Toothless lay curled up on a stone slab near the edge of Hiccup's room. The Black dragon was watching Hiccup scramble around getting ready, his large green eyes darting back and forth as they followed him. He sensed Hiccup's worry, he gave him a questioning growl, bordering on a purr. Hiccup stopped his scrambling, hearing Toothless's growl, and went up to the dragon, scratching Toothless's chin as he did so. Toothless gave Hiccup a reassuring look, his head tilted sideways and his large green eyes comforting. "I know bud." Hiccup whispered to the dragon, "But I still don't think I can be chief, I mean, dragon trainer sure, but chief? I won't be able to handle it."

Toothless gave Hiccup a growl, a skeptical sort of sound emerged from the dragon's throat.

"I mean, it's going to end in disaster, I won't be able to lead the tribe out of a torn sack."

This sentence was greeted with a disapproving sound from the nightfury that Hiccup leaned against.

"You know its true bud."

Toothless just looked at Hiccup and shook his head slightly, giving him a purr.

Gobber stepped into the room at that moment. "Ye have bas'cly been a chief thi' past week." he told him, then put on a more lighthearted tone, "And no un wa' stuck in any sacks, well not for very long anyway.."

Hiccup turned himself to the newcomer, "Yeah, but I had you to help me, as well as mom and Astrid, and other people as well."

"Well, wha' makes ye think you won't have tha' from now on?" Gobber said questioningly "It's no' like we'a gonna abandon you like a lost orphan."

Gobber took a seat on Hiccup's bed, facing the young man, he sighed and said, "Hiccup.. You are no' ya father, no un is, Stoick was a great man, everythin' a viking should be, but that doesn' mean ya can't be jus' as great. He would'a been tha first to tell you that."

Hiccup stared at the floor for a moment, he put on a faint smile and then said "You know Gobber, you're sounding a lot like Astrid."

The blacksmith just looked at Hiccup with slight confusion, then shrugged. "Anyway," he then spoke up, "the reason I came here." As he spoke, he reached inside a leather pouch he had on him. He took out a helmet, it was made of glittering steel, you could see the ripples of darker and lighter alloys woven together. It was unlike that most vikings wore, it wasn't just a half-helm, it had a black visor that could be put up and down on the front and layered leather on the back. It would cover his whole head if he wore it, not just the top. There were two horns sticking out of it, like spikes sticking out diagonally up and back above his head.

"I ma'e this for you." Gobber told to Hiccup as he handed him the finely made piece. "I foun' tha helmet Stoick gave ya befo'e ya started dragon training five years ago, ya know, the one made from.. yeah. Gobber gestured with his arms.

"Anyway, I reforged it to fit you, had to add a whole bunch of steel to it." The smith said, "You've really grown since then."

"What are these ripples?" Hiccup asked quietly admiring the handiwork.

"Oh those? They are from a mix of metals I tried, gronkle iron as well as a few types of steel, ma'e et much lighter and as strong." Gobber answered.

"Thank you..." Hiccup almost whispered, "This is really made from the one dad gave me?"

The large viking just nodded, a sorrowful glint appearing then rapidly vanishing from his face. Gobber ran his head across his eye and sniffed. "Anyway lad, I'll see ya this evening."

The evening came quickly that day, too quickly for Hiccup's liking, yet his nerves still held at bay. As the sun fell below the sea, Hiccup found himself sitting outside the mead hall, watching Toothless bounding and gliding through the dark plaza, the dark dragon almost invisible in the moonlight. The full moon was out tonight, making Toothless stop at times and gaze at the white orb in wonder.

Valka walked out into the cold and called out to Hiccup, "It's time." she said, gesturing to Hiccup to come inside. Hiccup rose and walked into the large hall. Toothless, seeing his rider walk away, bounded towards the entrance to the mead hall and entered besides Hiccup. A rush of warm air hit them as they entered the fire-heated building. The roaring fire-pit in the centre of the gathering, piled high with pieces of oil-soaked timber. Around the burning pit was a crowd of vikings, either standing or sitting, gazing at the far end of the room. On the far end stood the village elder, a small old women who no one really knew how old she was. On either of the side walls were paintings of all the previous chiefs and heirs, the one of Hiccup and Stoick was was one of the largest and the most crowd parted as Hiccup, Toothless and Valka walked through. They walked around the fire, and as they reached the front of the crowd Valka went off and sat on a table with Freyda a larger and older version of Astrid, who was also sitting close by, Gobber with his tankard-hand replacing the usual hook or tongs and finally Snotlout and Spitelout, the remaining part of Hiccup's Family, attempting to look as important as they could.

Hiccup walked to the front of the room, Toothless following closely at his heels. He felt a chill originate at the back of his neck as he felt every eye in the room upon him. His heart began beating rapidly, his nerves on edge. It felt like an eternity until he reached the raised platform on which the elder stood. As he reached the elder, the short old women gestured for him to kneel down, he did so, both his knees on the ground, his head facing up and arms by his sides. Toothless sat behind him, his wings folded up and and a curious look on his face.

Hiccup relaxed as the attention in the room turned to the elder. Her staff was adorned in runes and feathers and colourful stones, slightly jingling as she moved it. She was drawing runes in the air it seemed, as though she was writing a message to the gods. The anticipation of the crowd grew, and Hiccup realised it was largely due to. Gobber was especially attentive, being the one of the few who could understand her scribbles and often acted as a translator to many of the tribespeople.

The elder began a chant, the way the fire played against her face and the enlarged shadow behind her gave the scene an otherworldly look, her flailing staff looked eery in the flickering firelight. The elder's voice was unexpected for a woman of her stature; it boomed loudly as the women chanted prayers to Odin and Frigga and all the other gods up in Asgard.

She finished up the initial prayers, burning a wooden talisman in the shape of an upwards facing arrow, a rune for Tyr and for leadership. The smoke coming off of the burning rune was sweet smelling to Hiccup, even though it was just normal pine, He inhaled deeply as the smoke drifted at his face. He let himself drift in the moment, not thinking about anything but the burning smell. Through the drifting

smoke he saw Astrid at the front of the crowd, she was looking at him. Her braid was on her shoulder, and locks of her golden hair were slightly covering her eyes, causing her to need to move it out of the way. In her eyes was a look of admiration, he met those eyes, allowing himself to sink into her gaze.

It was the elder speaking to him that snapped him out of his thoughts. "Your hand." She requested firmly in a voice that he could just hear, making a stark contrast between her previous display of power in her voice. He gave her his left hand, then braced himself for pain as she withdrew a sharp dagger from her robes. She cut his hand, allowing a bit of blood to pour out into a ceremonial chiseled stone basin; she then did the same with her hand. "By the blood of men and gods, do you vow to lead this village and uphold its traditions to the best of your ability?" She said to him.

Hiccup, intently focusing on her voice answered, "I do."

The firelight danced of Hiccup's cloaked form, making the shadow behind him look as if it was cast from someone with the proportions of Stoick the Vast. Then the elder spoke again. "Do you vow by the gods in Asgard to guard your charge?"

"I do."

"An do you vow to bring Berk into a brighter future?" She finally said, her voice glad but faint.

"I do." Hiccup replied after a second's hesitation, butterflies fluttering in his stomach.

The elder dipped two fingers in the blood, then drew a sigil on Hiccup's forehead, a dot above an upwards-facing crescent and a line coming down perpendicular to it.

The room burst into cheers, vikings were on their feet clapping and swinging weapons they carry on their shoulders or hips in dangerous ways. Toothless perked up his ears at the sound of sudden cheering and did his best to put on a smile, his gums showing.

Astrid ran up to Hiccup, grabbing him in a strong embrace. Hiccup stumbled as he was set upon by the blond, but regained his two looked at each other's eyes, Astrid beaming at him. Hiccup returned a smile, his nerves and responsibility for a moment. He kissed her and she returned the gesture. They stood like this for a while, arms and lips intertwined, ignoring the increased cheers and catcalls from the crowd.

They broke apart as the head of Toothless came in between them. Hiccup patted the head of the dark dragon as he looked affectionately into Astrid's eyes, her head tilted slightly to the side. She gave him a smirk and held his hand tightly and affectionately.

It was then when Gobber put his arms, around their shoulders and yelled out in a cheerful voice, a hint of pride playing around in his tone, "Good on ya lad! Now, le' tha partey begin!"

* * *

><p>Liked it? Have a comment? Have a suggestion? Have some

criticism? Write a review!

****Thanks for reading.****

4. Chapter 4

****Chapter four is up, it was both hard and interesting to write for me. Hopefully it will be interesting to read for all of you.****

****Thank you to everyone who reviewed, followed and/or favorited****, it's these little things that make writing stories even more fun.****

****In short, enjoy the chapter.****

*** * ***

><p>Chapter 4: Let Him Sleep

The bright light hurt as it shined from outside of his closed eyelids. Hiccup attempted to open his eyes but winced as the mid-morning light made his head throb in pain. He felt a nudge to his side, he groaned as he got up to a half-sitting position, his back resting upon a tree, and forced his eyes open. Toothless was looking cheerful, too cheerful for the situation Hiccup was in. He rubbed the sides of his head and eyes, trying to get orientated, it was then he realised he was not at home. He looked around at his surroundings, It was sparsely wooded with a small lake close by. All around him were the stone walls of cliff faces, covered in ivy and moss; they were in the cove near raven point, the spot where he first found Toothless.

It was then that he became acutely aware of a presence sprawled partially on top of him. Golden hair was spread across the shirt of green wool on his chest. "Hmm.. wha.." He moaned as he struggled to figure out what was happening. Astrid tired ten and turned her head towards his, and smiled softly with her eyes still closed. "You really can't hold your liquor." She said lightly, before moving her hand from underneath her head.

The previous night began to come back to him. The induction as well as the feat and party happening afterwards. He remembered the hoard of vikings seeking to congratulate him on his chieftainship as soon as Gobber announced the festivities, and he remembered attempting to hide in the shadows from said hoard. Eventually the party settled to many vikings either sitting around a table, shouting and drinking, dancing to Gobber's panpipes and his renditions of popular songs, or in the case of the younger vikings, huddling in corners.

Hiccup spent most of that night alone with Astrid, even Toothless gave him his solitude. It wasn't until they were found by the twins did the copious drinking begin. They were playing a drinking game that had the potential for loss of limbs or eyes; they were throwing a sharpened knife at a wooden pillar ten meters away, if you missed you had to take a drink, causing those with less skill to get even more clumsy. Hiccup was surprisingly good at this, getting two throws on target in a row, but when he began missing, he realised why this game could get dangerous.

It wasn't Hiccup's first time drinking, he was a viking after all, but he was never an avid drinker. After his third tankard of mead he was unlikely to hit the wide side of a barn, from the inside. It was around that that the game degenerated into simply drinking, mead, wine and ale all flowed swiftly through the hall. One of Hiccup's last memories was of Astrid, only slightly tipsy after her fourth drink, snuggling up to him as the game ended when Tuffnut's knife throw almost impaled Snotlout and the two began a wrestling brawl.

It was all hazy afterwards but he guessed he and Astrid somehow made it to the cove, but what happened next he had no idea. He rubbed his head to get rid of the ache, then reality dawned on him. What happened last night.. did we.. no. He thought. "Astrid," He asked warily, "Did uhh.. something happen last night?"

"Hmm..?" She voiced with a questioning tone. "Oh! No.. no. Nothing serious at least." she blushed as she said it.

"That's a relief." He stated quickly and quietly, trying to not meet the blond's gaze.

A sudden sense of nausea overcame him, making close his eyes and start taking deep breaths to avoid spilling whatever he has eaten over the previous night. It didn't help, and he ended up spewing bile bent over behind the tree he rested on. As he heaved, he felt a calm hand touch his shoulder reassuringly. "Sorry." He said as he finished emptying the contents of his stomach. He felt sweat soak into his unwieldy auburn hair, making it a shade darker. He walked up to the lake a few meters away from him and flushed the taste of vomit out of his mouth with the water, all the while feeling the reassuring presence of Astrid at his side. "You really can't hold your drink, can you?" She said, a sarcastically cheerful twinkle in her sky-blue eyes.

"Very funny." He remarked dryly. He looked at her in a sense of dark jealousy, how is she not feeling as bad as him? She must have had at least as many drinks as he had last night, yet here she stood, graceful and smirking in an you-should-have-seen-this-coming sort of way.

"What happened last night anyway?" He asked after he cleared his mouth.

"Well, lets just say you were a true viking chief." She answered

"That bad huh?"

"Well... we did need those old warehouses demolished at some point.."

Hiccup groaned and put a hand on his forehead and slid it down his face slowly. "That's it! No more alcohol!" He yelled dramatically, putting his hands over his head, "I'm done!"

The outburst only caused Astrid to laugh.

His yells alerted Toothless, who was laying down silently on a

charred stone, making him perk his ears up and gaze at Hiccup with his large green eyes. Stormfly appeared at that moment, the sharp, blue, bird-like nadder flew in from the top of the cove and landed near the water and walked down to Astrid, crooning. Astrid patted the dragon, who seemed glad to have found her, but was anxious to bring her back home, as the dragon's headbutting began. "Okay, Okay!" Astrid said to Stormfly, "Calm down girl."

"I guess we should be heading back to the village?" She remarked passively "You wouldn't want to be late to your first day as chief."

"Well," Hiccup replied as he was walking up to Toothless, "I honestly doubt that anyone is awake yet after last night." He rubbed his temple.

Hiccup was about to hop up on Toothless's saddle, yet it wasn't there. Right he thought took it off before the ceremony. Toothless's prosthetic fin was on, yet it could not be controlled by Hiccup meaning the dragon was grounded for a while. "You really need to let me make you a fin that you can control bud." Hiccup told the nightfury.

It took them a while to get out of the cove. Toothless could climb the steep cliff faces that lined the cove, yet with great difficulty, even with the help of Stormfly, who Astrid was riding without a saddle. After they made it out, it took them little time to get to town, even with Toothless grounded as he was.

As they made their way into town, it became apparent that Hiccup's statement that no one would be awake was not as accurate as he would have liked. While most people were up and about, no one resented him or berated him for his tardiness, they were vikings after all. In fact, the young viking got more praise than he bargained for because of his actions last night, apparently partying and getting rid of 'unwanted' buildings at the same time is a virtue.

The afternoon found Hiccup and Gobber sitting by the fire in the mead hall and looking over a list of tasks for the day. Hiccup was changed into his usual riding gear, his leather suit and pants, and Gobber, as always, wore his stocky, striped pants and a grey vest over a woollen shirt. The large man also had a horned helmet on his head, as any self-respecting viking should.

The firelight mingled with what dim sunlight could enter through the thin windows of the hall, producing strange shadows and illuminating the working duo.

"No' a whole lot ta do today." Gobber said to Hiccup as they were delegating tasks, "Tha cleanup is almos' done, what's left?"

"We have to catalogue the winter stores." Hiccup offered.

"Tha' can wait 'till autumn." Gobber countered, "Wha' can't wait is the issue of dragons."

"What issue." Hiccup asked.

"Well, if ya haven't noticed, the dragons from tha arctic nest are still here, and they will hunt the island bare if we don't get them

to move elsewhere." The large viking replied.

"Well, what do you suggest we do?" Hiccup asked.

"I don't know, yer the chief and the dragon master." The large man replied.

"So much for not abandoning me like a lost orphan."

"Well, can't ya ge' them all ta follow that dragon of yours?" Gobber inquired, "Isn't 'e some sort o' dragon-king now?"

"No Gobber, there is no Alpha anymore as Drago's bewilderbeast was defeated by more than one dragon." Hiccup replied, "I guess we'll have to do it the old-fashioned way, bait and corral."

"Well, ye have fun with tha'." Gobber quipped, "I'll be off at tha forge."

That evening, Hiccup was sitting cross-legged in front of the fire pit at his house. Toothless was by his side playing with the fire, firing small blasts of his purple plasma at the roaring pit. Hiccup had one hand on the dragon's head, gently stroking it while staring at the mixture of blue and yellow flame. The doors behind him opened slightly, allowing a rush of cold air to blow in, causing the fire to flicker for a moment.

"Hiccup!" Valka exclaimed as she walked into the house, Cloudjumper following through the large double doors.

"Evening mom." He sighed in greeting, "Would you be surprised if I said I wanted my old job back?"

"No." She said, "but I'd be surprised if you took it." Valka kneeled next to him, looking into his eyes, green and turquoise eyes locked together. "Being a chief is not an easy task, but you handled the last week well, and the ceremony does not change anything." Valka added.

"But life felt so much easier when my only responsibility was the dragon academy." He said.

"I know Hiccup, but if it means anything to you, you are handling this better than your father did when he first became chief." She added with a smile.

"Really?." He asked skeptically, "Me better than dad? Better than 'Stoick the Vast', the greatest chief the tribe has ever seen?"

"Yes." she replied simply, running her hand through her auburn hair, "I remember when Stoick made chief, we were just married for a few month then. I remember he was more worried than you, trying to be perfect, stressing over every little problem." She added soothingly.

"How did he change? What happened to make him calmer?" The youth asked.

"He realised he didn't need to be perfect." Valka answered simply,

"No one expects you to get everything done perfectly and instantly. You're just human."

Hiccup put on a faint smile, "What happened to 'heart of a chief and the soul of a dragon?"

"Oh Hiccup." She chuckled, pulling him into a hug.

They settled down in front of the fire pit, Cloudjumper and Toothless ran outside, to do whatever they will. Hiccup stretched his shoulders, feeling his back crack, then sighed in relief. "How is the dragon academy doing?" Hiccup inquired after a while. Valka snapped her gaze away from the fire. "Interesting if nothing else." She answered, "There are a few new people who want to join to be an active member. The dragons who were wounded in the battle are recovering, some slower than others, but they will live." She said this with a smile, reassuring Hiccup that his previous charge is fine. "Astrid and Fishlegs helped a lot with running the academy, helping me teach everyone about what I learned about the dragons, I can see what you like about that girl." Hiccup blushed as Valka spoke her piece, then replied, "If the academy is going well, maybe all the riders can help me with something."

"what's this 'something'?" Valka asked.

"We need to relocate a lot of the dragons from the King's nest." He started, "There's just too much of them for Berk to feed, we need to move them either back to the nest or to dragon island or even just let them spread across other islands."

"I see." She said, "Well, of course we'll help, you are the chief, but more than that, you are Hiccup." She said the last word with a loving voice. Hiccup smirked at that, Then while gesturing to all of himself, he quipped, "Nice to see everyone can handle all of this." Valka chuckled at the remark, although slightly confused at his inference, "Oh son, I've really been missing you all these years." she said with a melancholy tone. She looked at Hiccup, as though capturing this moment in her mind, this simple moment of family interaction, of time spent with her son, something she sacrificed for the last twenty years.

They sat there in silence, mother and son, enjoying each other's presence, the comfort only family can bring. At one point, the two wandering dragons returned, letting in a gust of cold air into the house, causing Hiccup to slightly shiver. The cold abated as the dragons joined them at their sides, laying down next to the fire. Hiccup looked at Toothless's tail, his fake tailfin had a layer of frost on it, unlike his real one, which was warmed by the dragon's heat.

Hiccup took out his notebook and laid it out on the floor. Pulling out his dagger, he sharpened a piece of charcoal and began drawing in the book. He sketched a version of Toothless's tailfins annotating the one on the left, the prosthetic, with notes on measurement, materials, structure and mechanisms. The black dragon looked over Hiccup's shoulders as he drew, fascinated at the patterns being created on the paper.

"What are you drawing." Vlaka asked curiously.

"You'll see." Hiccup replied, not losing his focus on the design.

He flicked the pages back to an earlier design, then copied sections of it into the new prototype. He drew a gear system on the edge of the fin, annotating each gear with notes on size and revolutions, as well as scribbling down calculations on the edge of the page. Hiccup did not notice when his mother finally got up and entered the master bedroom on the ground floor, or as Cloudjumper followed her. Nor did he notice when Toothless stopped looking at the drawing over his shoulder and curled up to go to sleep behind him, still allowing Hiccup to rest his back on his side.

Hiccup did not notice any of this as he worked on the design. Eventually he got up and went upstairs to bring down a ruler and a large piece of parchment, which he used to properly draw up his design. His eyes grew tired but he kept them opened and kept his focus on the task at hand. He took some measurements of Toothless's tail, causing the dragon to stir in his sleep, but not to wake up. The Horizon outside was tinted pink by the time he finished his design, heralding a new day.

As the sunlight entered the house through narrow windows, Valka went out of the bedroom into the main section of the house to find Hiccup asleep, Toothless cradling him in his wing, and the nightfury's large, green, catlike eyes looking at her, _let him sleep._

* * *

><p>Thanks for reading!_
>

If you liked it, consider writing a review on what I did well or on what I could improve on, even if you didn't like it, consider writing you critique.

Also, if you want, follow and favorite.

**~Shonstantin **

5. Chapter 5

Okay, this chapter is a bit (read: a lot) earlier this time, this will probably not be a regular occurrence.

**Anyway, thank you to everyone that followed, favourited or reviewed, I really appreciate it, especially any critique on my writing. **

Well, off to the story you go, enjoy!

* * *

><p>Chapter 5: A Day's Work

A viking chief's job consisted mainly of heroics and leadership. A viking chief is looked upon to guide men into battle, to lead raids, to conquer enemies, to organise the village, to fight foul beasts, to bring glory to his tribe and to his name, to win battles and take names; in short a viking chief's job is supposed to be all but

boring, it is supposed to be exciting every single day. Yet here Hiccup was, the chief of the Hooligan clan, the vikings of Berk, one of the most influential tribes of the archipelago, and what was this great leader doing? He was sitting in his room, in the middle of the day, his tabletop pointlessly illuminated by an obsolete candle, and he was writing a letter.

He dipped his quill into the inkwell, then twisted it around so the ink won't drip off the tip, and put pen to paper and began to write. It was a letter to Berk's enemies-turned-allies, the Outcast tribe, an invitation of sorts, and a harbinger of bad news. Alvin the Redeemed, previously Alvin the Treacherous, was the leader of the Outcast tribe, and he rekindled his friendship with Stoick in the five years after the peace between the tribes was struck. It was not going to be enjoyable telling the Outcast chief that his friend was dead, even more so when that friend was Hiccup's father, that is why Hiccup decided the announcement was to be done face to face, and why he was inviting him to Berk.

It took him some time, but eventually he finished the letter; signing it with his name and position. He rolled up the parchment scroll then sealed it with hot, molten wax. He tied the sealed parchment to the leg of a terrible terror, a small green dragon the size of a cat, and the terror flew off out of an open window. It would fly all the way to Outcast island, Hiccup knew, and would return with the reply. This system of communication was created shortly after the alliance was forged between the two tribes, allowing for more efficient correspondence.

He stretched, his back leaning beyond the chair's support, then sighed with relief. He sat in silence for a moment, looking at the dancing flame of the candle. He felt the warmth of even this weak fire on his hand as he held it above the burning wick.

He thought over the past few days, they felt less stressful than the previous week, well at least they did to Hiccup. The past few days were some of the most hectic days of work Berk has seen in a long time, although to Hiccup, the need for things to be done was comforting; with little time to rest, he had no time to overthink situations or second guess his own decisions in the aftermath.

The focus of the past days was attempting to move an entire nest of dragons off of Berk. It was not easy, nor will it ever be easy, to move upwards of two thousand semi-feral dragons off one Island and onto another Island far into the north. In the end, the Hiccup got the help of the dragon academy, and split it into two teams. The first team was headed by him, and consisted of Snotlout, Astrid, Eret, who was one of the newer additions to the academy, and half a dozen other riders, while the second team was lead by Valka and consisted of the Thorston twins, Ruff and Tuff, Fishlegs, A dozen viking riders and Gustav, the adolescent prodigy who was a great help at managing dragons during the battle against Drago. Both the teams would be leading the dragons to the nest, but would be doing so at slightly different times to make the large cluster of dragons more manageable.

The trip, that could've take them a day at the most, has taken them three days, and then some. It was hard to keep the dragons in line, and near the end, after two sleepless nights and their bait exhausted, Hiccup, backed by his team, corralled the dragons with

blasts of fire aimed at the air in the back of the flock. When Hiccup's team reached the nest, they met up with Valka's group. The dragons were seemingly having a sort of funeral for the fallen Bewilderbeast that used to lead them as their king.

The ceremony was beautiful, dragonfire of all colours was shot at the body of the dragon, causing it to shimmer in a rainbow of flames. All the dragons participated in this, even those from Berk paid homage to the king of their was amazing to see the now glittering corpse, preserved by the ice and cold, shimmered and swayed as though it was still alive. Hiccup saw Valka shed a tear, as though witnessing the passing of an old friend, in fact, He realised that was exactly what this was, the passing of a friend and guardian. As the ceremony ended, the body of the giant dragon was no more, disappeared into the air, into whatever afterlife the dragons believed in.

The score of humans stood there for a few silent moments feeling the peace of such a procession. "Is this a normal dragon funeral?" Astrid asked, breaking the silence. It was Valka who replied. "Yes, well no. This is what dragons do to those that pass, yet I've never seen it done on such a scale, this was... magnificent."

"It sure was." Hiccup whispered under his breath.

It was a short while before the dragons settled down from the swirling flight and the vibrant roars that echoed around them like thunder. It was a longer while still before the dragons calmed down enough that the riders could fly them back to Berk. And so, after they spent the night on the island, both for the benefit of their dragons and themselves, they began heading back. It was a journey that started out with over two thousand dragons and took almost half a week to complete, came down to a score of dragon riders flying to Berk in a day of flying.

And so it was now, a few days later that Hiccup snapped back to reality as the candle's flame licked at his hand. He pulled his hand back, causing him to fall back off from his chair. The youth groaned, moving his messy dark, auburn hair away from his eyes. "Okay, no more daydreaming next to fire." He whispered, causing Toothless, who before this moment seemed to be sleeping on his charred, stone bed in the corner of Hiccup's room, to chuckle as best a dragon could. To Hiccup this sounded more like he was trying to cough something up, but he recognised the sound nonetheless. "Ha freaking Ha!" He halfhearted exclaimed at Toothless, "Laugh it up you oversized lizard!" This only caused the onyx dragon to slap Hiccup with his tail.

Hiccup got up off the floor, brushing himself off. "Okay bud, that's everything done for today, unless people have found more problems to complain about." He said, mostly to himself than to the dragon. "Well, come on Toothless."

Both dragon and rider exited the house, leaving it empty, into the chilly northern air. Hiccup had his grey wolf-skin cloak that he first wore in his induction, keeping the crisp wind off him. They walked down the hill that lead into town, Toothless leaping in front of him. As they arrived in town, Hiccup spotted his cousin, Snotlout, sitting atop his monstrous nightmare, the large dragon ready to take off.

"Hey! Snotlout!" Hiccup Shouted, "Aren't you meant to be resting!" Snotlout, looked more worse for wear than his usual self, His charcoal hair was wild, long and dirty, a bandage covered his side and his face now sported a rugged beard. He also looked smaller, as though the weeks of inaction made him lose his prowess. In short he looked like he got into a fight with a cave bear, and gave it a run for his money. "I can't anymore!" The viking shouted, "I just can't stay still, its agonising, imagine staying in bed all day and not being able to move!" Snotlout had a determined expression set on his face. "Besides, Hookfang misses me." He said, gesturing at the large dragon he was sitting one. To hiccup, it seemed that it was the other way around, a certain rider that's too proud to admit it misses his dragon.

"Alright then," Hiccup said sympathetically, "but be careful." A look of relief flashed on Snotlout's face, happy that he was not stopped from taking his flight.

Hiccup eventually made it into the village forge. Toothless followed close behind him as he entered into the open-plan forge. Even though blacksmith workshop the was open to the outside, the blistering heat from the coal-fed forge hit Hiccup like a wave, causing his face to turn red soon after his entrance. Goober was in the forge, pounding of a blade of a sword he was smithing with a prosthetic hammer attachment. Sparks were flying off of the glowing red metal, hitting Gobber's brass face-mask. His dragon, Grump, a large stocky dragon with a tough and rugged brown hide and small wings was dozing in the corner, as he usually does.

The working blacksmith looked up as he noticed Hiccup walking in. "Hullo Lad." He said as Hiccup was taking off his fur cloak and putting on a brown leather apron, "Ya done with all yer 'chiefly duties'."

"Yeah, finally." He exclaimed in an exasperated sigh, as he picked up the project he's been working on. It was a new tail-fin for Toothless, one that he could control and not just keep in a set position like his current one. It worked on a system of gears attached to leather ropes that were in turn attached to Toothless's functioning tailfin, making the prosthetic function in a sort of symmetry. Yet for now, the tail was in its bare-bones stage. The mechanism that would run it was still in the process of creation, and that was what Hiccup sat out to complete.

He placed the half-complete tailfin on a workbench and began his tinkering. He already had several rods made, so he attached those to a system of bearing and tiny levers that connected to gears. It was finicky work, messing around with these extremely small parts, but progress was being made.

Hiccup ran out of metal rods, and he still needed two more to complete the fin's skeleton. He went up to the forge, which Gobber has previously vacated to a grindstone. While all this was occurring Toothless was looking over Hiccup's shoulder, trying to figure out what Hiccup was doing.

Hiccup began melting down iron ingots inside a small stone crucible. It was a long but calming process, the crucible was at the heart of the smelter, and Hiccup watched as the iron slowly changed colour from grey, to red, to orange and to white. The metal turned into

liquid, Hiccup put on a pair of thick leather gloves and picked up a pair of metal tongs, which he used to pour the iron out of the crucible and into a mold. The heat from the liquid, white metal flushed Hiccup's face when he poured it into two separate stone molds. All that was left to do now is to allow the metal to harden into the rods he needed.

While the rods cooled Hiccup went up to Gobber, who was now leaning against a wall, watching Hiccup work. "Ya know lad, it alwa's amazing ta watch ya work." The older man said, "Ya remind me of myself in me better days." Hiccup just smiled at his former mentor, accepting the compliment, then he added, "Well, I did learn from the best."

"HAH!" Gobber chuckled, "Tha' ya did lad, tha' ya did."

The rods took little time to cool, such being the properties of metal, and Hiccup went back to his craft. He worked on the fin's structure for several more hours, consulting the designs he had drawn up. Toothless left the forge at one point, going off to do whatever he was apt to, and returned near the end of Hiccup's blacksmithing session. By the time Hiccup left the forge, the sky was pink with the last light of the setting sun. The structure and mechanics of the fin was mostly complete, three days work having gone into it so far. 'It would need another few days of work' Hiccup thought as he ended his craftsmanship for the day.

Toothless half ran and half glided up to Hiccup when he realised he had left the forge, looking slightly annoyed Hiccup didn't wake him up. he grumbled at Hiccup when he got close to the young adult. "What's the matter Tooth," Hiccup asked sarcastically, "thought I've forgotten about you?" This earned Hiccup a sharp poke from the nightfury's paw.

"Oh what's the matter, can't handle a little alone time?" Hiccup said with a smile.

Toothless made a sound that was a cross between a growl and an annoyed sigh.

"You know what bud? Lets go flying. We haven't done that for a while!"

Toothless's annoyed scowl turned into a giddy expression as he heard Hiccup's proposal. Lately, the two went flying less and less, well, not on proper bonding flights they used to take together, due to Hiccup's chiefly duties, which is one of the key reasons Hiccup was constructing Toothless a new tail. As well as why the nightfury was overjoyed at the prospect of flying, him being mostly grounded without Hiccup at the current time.

After the two went up to the chief's house on top of the hill overlooking the town square and put on Toothless's saddle and prosthetic fin they were ready to take to the skies. Hiccup leapt on Toothless's back in a fluid motion, smoothly clicking in his metal leg into the stirrup that controlled the tailfin position. Hiccup was wearing his leather suit, specifically designed for dragon riding to be warm, durable, light and unrestrictive, and one other benefit it provided was its second nature as a gliding suit.

Toothless Jumped high in the air and flapped his wings once, and they

shot off. With a few more beats of his wings, the two gained a tremendous amount of height, soaring quickly into the pink and orange sky. Hiccup and Toothless acted and thought in unison, both knowing what the other is going to do before he does it, being less of a rider and a dragon and more of one symbiotic creature.

They pulled out of a vertical climb when they were off the coast of Berk, then quickly went into a steep dive. As the sea got close to them, Toothless spread his long wings and stopped their fall. They doubled back in their flight, now flying above the lush forests of Berk, Toothless flexing his wings gently in anticipation. "Ready bud?" Hiccup asked in confirmation. Toothless gave his rider an affirmative growl.

"Okay then, lets go." Hiccup said.

Hiccup clicked in the tail fin into a diving position and they were instantly among the trees in the forest. Hiccup clicked the tailfin back into its original position and they were in a level flight. They were weaving through the thick forest at breakneck speeds, adrenaline pumping through the veins of both human and dragon, wind flowing through Hiccup's messy hair. They dodge trees and stones on their maddening flight through the greenery, but they were soon too deep inside the forests and the trees became too dense. Hiccup clicked on the tailfin and the two rose up above the trees. They continued the climb until they were high above the island.

Hiccup looked at the now black sky, then back down into the semi-illuminated island, the vikings that were still out and about looked smaller than ants at this height. They rose up above the clouds, Hiccup gave a shiver as they passed through the icy cloud. The world around him was entirely different now, as though he was inside his own isolated little realm. The stars above them, the moon at their backs and the clouds like a blanket covering the world below were calming to say the least, keeping the worlds problems away from him and Toothless. The two glided onwards for a few silent moments, the only noises being the rushing wing and the occasional beat of Toothless's wings. In short it was amazing, it was liberating, it was... free.

"Gods, I've missed this." Hiccup whispered to no one in particular.

* * *

><p>Comments? Queries? Critique? Write a review!

Thanks for reading,

Shonstantin.

6. Chapter 6

Sorry for the delay in posting this chapter, I've had a bad case of writer's block. Anyway, I'm over it now and I finished the chapter (as you can see).

**Thank you all for being patient, and for all the follows, favorites

and reviews.**

**Enjoy. **

* * *

><p>Chapter 6: Harbinger of Dark News

The three ships approached the harbour in the late-morning light. They were mostly typical viking drakkars, their only difference was a spike, bone-covered figurehead instead of the usual wood-carved one. The three ships had black sails and dark hulls, the sails on the foremost ship had a curled screaming death, a rare, huge, spiked dragon that slightly resembled a morning-star flail, emblazoned on it with white paint, it was the sigil of the Outcast tribe.

On the decks of the ships stood a crowd of vikings, both men and women. On the leading ship stood Alving the Redeemed, a giant of a man, one of the few people whose size could rival that of Stoick the Vast. The massive viking chief looked glad if nothing else, probably because of the prospect of meeting an old friend. His face was scarred and covered with a large, bushy, black and grey beard, not neatly braided like Stoick's was, but still as large. On his head was a horned viking helmet, massive vertical horns sticking up, looking intimidating, which was no doubt the effect this man has worked on for much of his life. His armour was made of glimmering, scaled steel and his shoulder pads were spiked with sharp blades, adding to his wild look. On his back was a large crossbow as well as a huge, glittering broadsword that was about the size of an average man. Of course, this man was not average. His voice boomed as he shouted orders to the crews of the three ships.

"OARS DOWN!" He yelled in his thundering voice.

Instantly, oar slid from the sides of the ship, no doubt operated by viking below deck. They made a splash as they hit the water and began to cycle through their movements, pushing the ships along.

"SAILS" Alvin ordered.

Men scrambled on deck, pulling on ropes, lowering the large triangular sails. Alvin held his fist high above his head, signaling to the rudder-men to keep the ships' courses steady. A beat of a drum sounded, keeping the oarsmen in time, making their drift into port more efficient and orderly.

It took little time for the ships to pull up to the wharf, then stop to a halt just inches before the wooden walkways. As soon as the ships stopped, ropes were thrown at stumps in the wharf, pulling the ship to the side and holding it tightly in place. A gangplank was thrown down from the deck of the ship and Alvin was the first to walk down to dry land and to the procession that greeted them.

The procession was impressive, especially by viking standards. Most of the village has come down to greet the guests. All the dragon riders were here, their dragons standing by them, adding bright colours to the mostly brown, dirty-white and grey crowd. At the front of the crowd stood Hiccup, wearing his leather riding suit and chiefly cloak. On his head was the helmet Gobber gave him before his induction, His visor was pulled up, showing his face; the rest of his

head was visible as well as the helmet had no sides. The horns on his helmet were much smaller than that of Alvins, but were angled and positioned diagonally in a way that stopped them from being a hindrance in battle.

On either side of him stood Gobber and Valka, both dressed in their most viking-like attire, which was natural for Gobber, a bit less so for Hiccup's mother. Valka had her hooked staff in her hand, and her dragon, Cloudjumper, towering behind her, looking vigilantly at the newcomers. Gobber's dragon on the other hand was still snoozing near the forge. The members of the dragon academy were standing immediately behind the three leaders of the Hooligan tribe, the formal name of the tribe of Berk.

Astrid, Fishlegs, Snotlout, the twins and Gustav were standing at the head of the members of the academy. Behind them, the rest of the academy was assembled, including Eret, dragon-hunter-turned-rider, who was one of the academy's newest recruits and one of its most 'enthusiastic' learners. Beside each of the riders were their dragons, painting the scene with colour and movement. Eret's dragon companion was a timberjack, a large dragon with colossal wings, longer and wider than even those of a monstrous nightmare. It was mostly brown in colour, streaks of white adorning its huge wings that were spiked and sharp enough to cut down whole groves of trees in flight, hence the specie's name. The timberjack was fidgeting, it was not wholly used to being near large amounts of vikings.

"Pikeglider" Eret whispered soothingly at his dragon, "Calm down girl..." The dragon slowed its movement, yet her head was still moving around nervously.

Hiccup looked on grimly at the newcomers. Alvin was walking up to him, his face beaming and his arms spread wide in greeting. The large chief walked ahead of his crew, his chainmail jingling as he walked.

"Ah Hiccup!" He boomed, grabbing Hiccup by the hand and hitting him in the shoulder with his free arm, "How is my second favourite tribe going?" The man seemed more cheerful than Hiccup expected him to be, yet it also seemed normal as this was his normal outlook after the peace was forged between the two tribes. Despite the lasting peace between the two tribes, Hiccup could not stop himself from feeling slightly intimidated by the large man.

"The tribe is great Alvin," Hiccup responded, "I'm glad you came, we have matters to discuss."

"Aye that we do" Alvin said, then changed his tone into a more serious and quieter one as he leaned closer to the youth, "You see, I've been hearing rumors."

"I'm sure you have." Hiccup replied in a similar tone.

Alving let go of Hiccup's arm and shoulder and took a step back. "Well, we've had a long journey and I know I'm famished." This caused a roar of approval from both the Outcast and the Hooligan tribe, a roar that increased when Gobber said "To tha mead hall!" and lead off the crowd. Everyone followed Gobber to the mead hall, members of the Hooligan tribe and the Outcast party mingling with each other as they made their way to Berk's central building.

Alvin walked alongside Hiccup and Valka as they made their way up from the docks, their dragons gliding off to gods know where, and into the fire-lit hall. Inside the hall were giant kegs of mead and ale, tankards were lined up on a table before the giant barrels. Above the fire roasted fish and lamb, ready for the cook to carve out portions of the meat. Large platters of mashed vegetables and buckwheat were on tables next to the fire, inviting the vikings to dine. The feast in honor of the arrival of the Outcast procession was beginning.

Hiccup, Valka and Alvin went through the mead hall to one of the more secluded corners. On the way to their isolated spot, the Outcast chief grabbed a tankard of ale, the man already expecting bad news.

They sat in a dark corner where no one could hear them and most didn't know that they were there. "So Hiccup, I am beginning to think some of the rumours I've heard might be true." Alvin started grimly.

"I'm sure some of them are..." The youth answered in a quiet voice, "What rumours have you heard?"

Alvin turned to Hiccup's mother. "If what I've heard is correct, you are Valka." He said darkly, Valka nodding grimly in reply. Alvin sighed, his face fell, "Huh.. I was hoping you weren't that'd mean the rumour about Stoick..." Alvin put a hand on his forehead, "We were friends again, after all these years of war, I wanted more time with the man."

"I'm sorry that I couldn't tell you earlier." Hiccup added sadly, "It was just so hectic after dad.. passed."

"I would think so." The large man answered, "Did he get a proper viking funeral at the least?"

It was Valka who spoke up, "Aye, he did, a funeral for all to envy."

"I'm sorry for your loss." Alvin said to the two, he got up before adding, "You'll probably need a drink for the next part." The large man gestured for them to follow, they did so, wondering what he was about to do.

As they walked by the kegs, Valka and Hiccup poured mead in their cup, Hiccup pouring barely a mouthful, frowning at his lack of memory of the last time he got drunk, but he trusted Alvin just enough to know when to listen to him. Hiccup and Valka walked up around where Alvin thumped his tankard on a table before standing on top of it, all eyes in the room were on him.

A voice suddenly spoke up from behind him, "What's going on?" Astrid asked as she appeared behind him, placing one hand on his shoulder. "I... don't quite know." Hiccup admitted, "I guess we'll see."

When all attention was on him, Alvin cleared his throat and began. "Outcasts! I tell you this with sorrow, but chief Stoick the Vast has been killed in battle a moon ago." He looked at Hiccup for confirmation, Hiccup nodded to the large viking to continue. "Chief

Stoick was my peer and my friend, I propose a toast to in his name, to honor his memory and cement it in our hearts, may he drink with us in Valhalla!" A chorus of "Aye!" and "To his honor!" sprang up among the viking, the loudest of these being Gobber, and all of the gathered vikings took a swig of whatever drink they held in their hands.

The merriment lasted until the sky outside began to darken as the evening set in, all throughout the day, mead ale and wine flowed freely into the tankards of vikings. The more they drank, tha more the louder they got, up until the point when the alcohol took its toll on the merriers. It was only then when Alvin approached Hiccup, a serious look on his face, despite the numerous drinks Hiccup saw the giant man down. "Hiccup," He said sternly, causing the young chief to look at him curiously, "I need a word."

"Sure," Hiccup replied, "What is it?"

Alvin looked around, then silently said to Hiccup, "In private."

Alvin walked off out of the mead hall, Hiccup followed closely. The further away they walked from the mead hall, the more deserted the village got. 'I never realised how creepy Berk can be..' Hiccup thought. Eventually, Alvin stopped when he found a spot as secluded as he needed. They were in a gap between two houses, it was dark, yet the faint glow of a faraway torch allowed just enough light to reach the scene so that they could see each other well enough.

"What did you want to tell me?" Hiccup asked seriously as they came to a stop.

"I've been hearing rumors of a traitor in your midst.." The large man said sternly.

Hiccup looked confused. "A traitor? In Berk? What is there to betray?" He asked.

"A good question." Alvin almost whispered these words, making his tone sound menacing.

Hiccup put on a wary tone, "Any Idea who it is?"

"I don't know," Alvin said, but I have my suspicions."

"Anyone in particular?" Hiccup asked.

Before the large man could reply, loud blast broke the quiet aura of their meeting.

Hiccup turned to find the source of the sound "What was tha.." He began, but before he could finish, he felt a fist make contact with his jaw and he fell to the ground.

Hiccup got onto his hands and knees, his vision blurry and his mind dazed. A kick landed on his stomach, he collapsed and rolled onto his back. Standing over him was Alvin with a malicious look on his face. "You know Hiccup," He started, "I believe I've found out who the traitor is." The large man laughed.

"You don't say." Hiccup spat.

"Aye." The large man grumbled, "Need I remind you what my name was?"

"I remember quite well." Hiccup seethed, "Alvin the Treacherous."

The traitor laughed, the sound booming and deep, overpowering all other noise. "Ha! I always thought 'Alvin the Treacherous' sounded a lot better than 'Alvin the Redeemed'." He boomed. Alvin unsheathed his sword from the scabbard at his hip, the blade made a hissing sound as it scraped along leather.

Hiccup tried to get to his feet, this only earned him a hit with the hilt of Alvin's sword. He grunted as he fell back to the ground. He got up into an unsteady crouch, only to find Alvin's broadsword pointed at his face. With an angry scowl on his face, Hiccup reached for the sword at his side, ready to ignite it and burn the living hell out of the traitorous dog that towered over him.

"Don't even think about it!" Alvin warned gruffly, "Actually, give me that sword, pass it over, and no tricks."

Hiccup complied, throwing his double bladed sword onto the ground by Alvin's feet. He managed to get up to a standing position, feeling his ribs and face ache with each motion. He groaned, rubbing his jaw where the large man punched him. "Why are you doing this?" Hiccup asked, "We were allies, my father was your friend!"

"We were allies when it suited me," The Alvin growled, "And Stoick.. The man was a fool."

Hiccup's face turned red in anger, "Dad was a greater man than you'll ever be." He hissed, "He had honor. His word was holy to him, he would never betray someone who trusted him."

Hiccup paused for breath. "You are just a craven son of a whore!" Hiccup yelled in his anger.

"You'll pay for that." Alvin growled, hitting Hiccup with the flat side of his sword. "You know, I think I will make a cup out of your skull to drink out of when I conquered Berk." He said savagely.

Hiccup saw the dagger at Alvin's hip as the large man lined up a strike at his neck. The sword rose, then the blade came down in a flurry of steel. Hiccup lept out of the way, the sword hit the ground harmlessly. He lunged towards Alvin and grabbed the knife from his belt. Dodging a sideways strike from the large man, he stabbed the knife into the man's thigh, the blade tearing through leather and skin. He rolled out of the way. Alvin screamed as he felt the knife cut into his skin. The large man dropped his blade as he grabbed the dagger in his side, groaning as he pulled it out.

Hiccup moved away from from Alvin. He roared, mimicking the sound of a nightfury as close as any human could. A screeching sound filled the air and a blast of blue fire knocked Alvin backwards off his feet. Toothless lept up beside Hiccup, growling at his attacker.

"Ahh," Alvin said coolly, "You got your dragon."

He stomped on the ground powerfully a few times. The ground rumbled. Suddenly, one of the houses they stood next to crumbled in on itself and from it rose a screaming death. It was one of the most fearsome dragons. It resembled a sort of purple morning-star flail, a thin spiked tail coming out of a large, sharp, spherical head. Small wings sprouted from the dragons head, and the rotating tail aided it in its flight. Inside its mouth were rows of rotating teeth, as sharp as blades and tough enough to drill through dirt and stone. Its eyes were white, making the dragon mostly blind. It growled loudly.

"Well I've got mine." Alvin added, "And she's a beauty."

Toothless growled at the whispering death, the gesture was returned with malice as the air around Toothless and Hiccup vibrated with thunderous roars.

"Gods be damned..." Hiccup cursed, backing away slightly. Toothless stayed put, his growl intensifying. He screeched as he shot a ball of plasma-blue fire. It was not aimed at the dragon, but at the Outcast chief standing below it. The large man just barely dodged out of the way of the blast. The screaming death proved its namesake and screamed loudly, making Toothless flinch and Hiccup cover his ears. It blew a ring of fire at the two, shrugged off the flame as he covered Hiccup with a wing.

Alvin brushed himself off as he got up, "Why you little piece of.." He began, but stopped as Toothless fired another blast, this time at the purple dragon. Toothless gave no quarter to the beast, he leaped on the screaming death, ignoring the spikes on its ball-like body. Toothless dug its claws into the screaming death's scales as it thrashed around like a flail wielded by the gods he threw it against the side of a building. It hovered limply, and shook its head, It fired a powerful ring of fire at Toothless, knocking him back. He returned the gesture, and the two began their awe-inspiring brawl.

While this was happening, Hiccup took a dive of faith and managed to get his sword back, and just in time. As soon as he got the blade, Alvin was upon him, cutting at him with his broadsword. Hiccup parried the trike, and the ones that came after. He dodged and blocked the large man's strikes, weaving out of the way of cuts that would have cleaved a man in half. He saw the large man beginning to tire, he began his counterattack.

His sword burst into flames and sliced through the air at the large viking. It was a blur of fire and iron as it arced down at Alvin. The man blocked it, but not before he managed to singe his beard. He yelped in pain. The mortal dance continued, each giving as good as they got, metal clinking against metal, drowning out the sounds of fighting in the background. Sweat beaded on Hiccup's brow as he grew tired, fear began to well in the pit of his stomach. Finally, Alvin has had enough.

"Let's end this." He yelled as he kicked at Hiccup's metallic, false leg. The young man fell to the ground, losing grasp of his sword and getting a face-full of dirt. Hiccup turned to see Alvin once again holding him at sword's-edge. "And here we are again." Alvin

said.

"Here we are." Hiccup agreed darkly, accepting his fate solemnly.

"And now, you die." Alvin said, slicing at Hiccup's head.

Hiccup closed his eyes in wait for his fate. 'I've lived a good life, right?' he thought.

The blade never came, only a loud, screeching blast, a gruff scream and the sound of retreating footsteps.

* * *

><p>Thank you for reading. If you enjoyed, consider leaving a review. If not, leave a message on how I can make the next chapter better.

~Shonstantin.

7. Chapter 7

Chapter seven is here! Sorry for the delay everyone, I've had trouble writing this chapter, but I'm quite happy as to how it turned out. I could have released it earlier, but I didn't want to post a half-baked piece.

Thank you all for favoriting and following.

**Enjoy! **

* * *

><p>Chapter 7: Unyielding

Alvin's coup was short lived and crumbled as soon as a certain nightfury stopped a blade detaching Hiccup's head from his shoulders. It only took Toothless a well aimed blast of fire to get the Outcast chief to flee, metaphorical tail between his legs. After seeing their mighty chief run from battle, the Outcast warriors that came with Alvin decided they valued the skin on their backs more than the glory of bloody battle.

Yet the day was not without its consequences for Berk. The fires were the biggest and most pressing problem. The Outcasts brought along their own dragons in anticipation for the betrayal, and the beasts fought with great efficiency. Blasts of fire and gusts of smoke were commonplace on the battlefield that evening, making Berk's central plaza a scorched and burning wreck. Many residences were now but darkened shells of what they used to be, burned to their foundations or crumbled down to rubble, ash littering the ruins. If it was not for the icy northern rain of autumn, the fires would have taken much of the lower town with them, possibly claiming as much lives as the fighting itself.

The fighting was wild and bloody. Most of the Hooligan tribe did not anticipate this attack, and coupled with the excessive amount of drink supplied at the feast, it was safe to say that much of Berk's

fighting force was sprawled in their homes or alleys due to their excessive merriment. Whatever vikings could fight, did so desperately and messily. Most did not have the time to arm themselves properly, and so much of the combat devolved into rough bouts of wrestling or grappling for their enemy's weapon.

There were many wounds, injuries and casualties incurred by the unexpected battle, the village infirmary was filled over capacity, the village elder working overtime to keep up with the treatments. The old women had to get many assistants just to account for the hindrance of age and the sheer capacity of care needed.

It was here in the village infirmary, the day after the battle, where Hiccup stood. The room wasn't necessarily small, but the amount of people lying on beds or gurneys made it cramped. It was a normal viking building, a firepit was at the centre with the patient beds next to the walls. At the back of the room there was an open window, allowing fresh air into the stuffy room, despite this, the air in the room was stale and smelt of festering flesh. It was quiet, but for the hushed talking of carers or the few patients that resisted sleep, their voices whispered sharply in the thick air.

Hiccup stood by a sitting Astrid. Her shoulder was bandaged, the white fabric was red brown with dried blood and pus, showing the wound caused by a brave Outcast and his spear. It was the last thing that the Outcast did on this world before his head was swiftly separated from his body, courtesy of Astrid's twin-bladed axe. The wound wasn't deep, but the traitor managed to sever a tendon, making Astrid's left arm temporarily useless. The bandage was being slowly unraveled by one of the elder's assistance, in this case, Freyda; Astrid's mother and a shieldmatron of some medical repute.

Freyda was an older version of Astrid, her hair was just a shade duller in colour but her eyes were just as blue. She was larger, broader of hip and shoulder, and her hair hung down behind her in many small braids instead of her daughter's one large braid. She wore a simple shirt and skirt, grey, worn and stained, Hiccup did not want to guess how many of the stains were created in the heat of battle, and on her belt hung a sharp dagger; more useful than one might think in the current environment.

She unwound Astrid's bandage revealing the wound beneath. It wasn't bleeding anymore, and luckily did not look infected, yet it was still red and black and torn. "Can you move your hand?" Freyda asked, her voice smooth yet commanding. Astrid clenched her fist open and closed, getting a satisfied smile from her mother, yet when she lifted her hand she grunted in pain and let it fall to her side.

"Hiccup," Freyda began, "Help me clean the wound."

Hiccup followed her lead, carefully filling a clay bowl with water and set it above the fire, letting it boil. The water heated up slowly, it was a while before it began agitating and the water boiled, he carefully took it off the fire and placed it on Astrid's bedside table, then winced as his hand grazed the water shaking his hand as to let the air around him cool it down.

Under Freyda's instruction, Hiccup was to gently pour the boiling water on Astrid's wound, while she applied poultices and cleaned it.

Hiccup attempted to be as gentle as he could while pouring the scalding liquid, every time that Astrid winced or grunted Hiccup felt like he was slapped in the face, knowing that he was the one causing the pain. Astrid's hand held his as he poured the water on the wound, purging it of fester. Every time that the water hit the wound, Astrid's hand clenched, her knuckles turning white, and then relaxed as the healing herbs were applied, it was painful, but necessary, and Hiccup knew she knew it.

By the time the wound cleaning was complete, the area around it on Astrid's shoulder was a raw red colour, some of it was even scalded. Freyda finally applied a soothing salve on her daughter's wound, making Astrid sigh in relief and Hiccup look on thankfully. Freyda walked off after making sure her daughter was alright, and sharing a quick embrace. As she walked past Hiccup, he muttered a thanks to the woman, and she just gave him a kind and compassionate smile in return.

Hiccup took some clean bandage from a supply cupboard and began winding Astrid's shoulder with it, closing the wound from the air around it. As the bandage hit the wound it immediately stained light brown from the poultice on Astrid's shoulder, she hissed as it made contact with the open wound. The bandage was finally securely around Astrid's shoulder, Hiccup sat down beside his golden haired lover and calmly took her into his embrace, being careful as to not touch her battered shoulder.

"Are you alright?" He asked quietly as Astrid leaned her head onto his shoulder. This earned him a stunted chuckle as the blond laughed at the absurdity of his question.

"What do you think? She answered rhetorically, "Did it look like fun to you?" She punched him lightly in the shoulder with her good arm.

"I'm sorry.." He said quietly, pulling her in closer.

"Don't be, It had to be done." She said, "And at least now I can get out of here, it's really starting to smell."

"Yeah, I know what you mean." Hiccup added as he wrinkled his nose, "Do you want to get out of here."

Astrid nodded and they silently walked outside. The bright midday sunlight greeted them as they exited the dim infirmary, causing them both to blink rapidly as they readjusted their eyes. They walked down the street hand in hand, a light breeze blowing at their faces. The street was quiet, unusually so, as most people would be up and about at this time, going on and doing the many tasks that were required to keep a village running. Today was different, it was eery. And so, the only sound was the rustle of the wind and the footsteps they created.

They made their way through the streets of berk, ducking in and out of alleys, dodging attention for no particular reason other than their want of solitude. They arrived at a secluded spot, a cliff edge overlooking a gravel beach below, hidden by a grassy mound. They sat near the edge of the cliff, holding hands and staring at the horizon, Astrid leaning on Hiccup. They stayed there in silence for a while, just enjoying each other's company and the view.

"Why would he do that?" Hiccup asked silently, "Why would Alvin betray us?"

Astrid turned her head towards Hiccup, "He is a madman," She began, "He doesn't see the benefit of peace, of trade, of harmony, all he sees is power."

She let the last word hang for a second, then continued. "We are prosperous, and he sees it, he doesn't care about alliances or friendships, he takes what he want, or tries to anyway." She squeezed Hiccup's hand, "He heard rumors of Stoick," She began, "and he thought we were weak and vulnerable, so he took a chance."

"Well lucky for us, we are stronger than we look." Hiccup finished.

Hiccup pulled Astrid closer to him, nestling her in his arms, "If it wasn't for you, the village might have been lost."

"I know," She said, "I think I deserve a thank you."

And with that, she kissed him. Hiccup kissed back, with their lips intertwined they lay there, their arms holding on to each other tightly, pulling each other ever closer. Astrid's hair fell on Hiccup's face, tickling him and filling the air around him with a sweet smell. Lips locked and arms wandering they lay like this for gods know how much time, to Hiccup, this felt like an instant and an eternity, the passage of time no longer seemed to matter. It was breathtaking and exhilarating, to Hiccup, this was all that existed, all of his worries and fears, all of the troubles of the world have left him. All that existed now was him and was content, if only this moment would last forever.

It did not, however. Eventually, the two separated, their hair a mess and their faces flushed and blushing. They sat up, their backs leaning on the grassy mound behind them, arms still locked. "That was... quite a nice 'thank you'" Astrid said breathlessly.

"I should be greatfull more often." Hiccup replied, earning him a coy look from Astrid.

They sat together for a while enjoying the calm, oblivious of the world around them, up until the point that a black shadow appeared above them, and a darker dragon soared above them before circling back and landing before the two. Toothless could always be trusted to keep Hiccup's 'mischief' in check.

The black dragon's scales glittered in the sunlight, like onyx gems under a jeweler's light. On his tail was a source of interest; a collection of gears and spokes, an automated tailfin that allowed Toothless to fly on his own unimpeded, without Hiccup's input. That didn't mean the dragon sought his rider's company any less, in fact, Toothless was now more eager to fly with Hiccup ever since the latter finished the construction of his new and improved fin. He wanted to impress Hiccup and to show him what a nightfury is truly capable of when it has full time use of both of his tail-fins.

Toothless leapt on the sitting Hiccup, giving the viking a slobbery lick with his tongue. Hiccup got to his feet and groaned in disgust.

"Toothless..!" He sighed in frustration, "Ughh, I am not going to get this smell off of my clothes any time soon."

Astrid laughed at his frustrations, rolling up as her sides ached from the jerkiness of joy. "I'm sorry.." She stuttered while laughing, "but you have to admit, that is funny."

"Ha ha, very funny." Hiccup said in mock anger, he tried putting on a stern face, but failed miserably as he too cracked up in laughter. While this was going on, Toothless just looked at the two of them in confusion, not understanding the cause for their amusement.

The two eventually calmed down from their laughter and got up off of the ground. Hiccup stood beside Toothless, leaning slightly on the black dragon, and faced Astrid. "I guess I'll see you at the town meeting?" She stated questioningly.

"Well I am running it, and I am the chief..." He replied.

"Right." Astrid said, leaning in close to him, then with a voice that sent shivers down Hiccup's spine she added, "I'll see you tonight."

She walked off, leaving Hiccup staring goofily after her.

The evening came on fast, the day fading rapidly as though it aimed to flee Berk out of some sort of unfounded fear. As the sun came down, the last rays of light found Hiccup in the mead hall standing on a slightly raised platform behind the great bonfire in the centre of the building. He was dressed in his armour and grey cloak, right now he needed to look as chiefly as he can, Hiccup needed to a tower of hope.

The hall slowly filled as the village folk finished their daily duties and arrived for the evening meal; that and for the hope of news and reassurance. They would get little of the latter.

The hall was finally full, and with a nod to a now present and tankard wielding Gobber, he managed to get the attention of the hall; well, more accurately, Gobber was able to get the attention of the hall by hammering his tankard and bellowing his lungs out. With all the attention in the hall centred on him, Hiccup began to speak.

"Last night was a dark time for us," He began sharply, "those that we thought our allies have proved false, the Outcasts betrayed us, and Alvin proved his namesake."

At this, many swore on Alvin's name, or cursed his actions and condemned him, creating a sound like rolling thunder throughout the hall. After this, Hiccup continued. "Many among you considered some of the Outcasts that came with Alvin friends or acquaintances, After last night you can see how false they were, we could see their true nature, we can see why they are Outcasts." Hiccup let the last word hang for a second, then continued. "The time has come once again to sharpen our weapons and arm ourselves. We must weather the coming storm and shield ourselves from this threat. They are a kind of foe we have never faced before; they know us, they know the landscape of Berk, they know the islands around us and they have dragons. They will come again, do not doubt that, and they will come in force, we

must be ready to face them."

Hiccup let his words sink in as he shattered Berk's hard won peace. He put on a calmer tone. "I know we have only recently recovered from a battle, yet we must prepare for another; we all saw last night the dangers of being caught unawares, and we paid for it in blood. We cannot let this happen again, we must be ready."

He paused for breath.

"We might have been bloodied last night, yet we will rise up with renewed strength, we will not bow to Alvin, we are the vikings of Berk, we are the first dragon riders, the best dragon riders. We are the ones who stood three hundred years in the face of a greater foe than the Outcasts can ever be, and we'll be the ones that will emerge from this war victorious."

He paused again, allowing silence to take over for a second.

"We will not yield!" He shouted finally. A blast of blue fire illuminated the scene as Toothless chose that moment to add a bit of flair to Hiccup's speech; The hall erupted in cheers and yells of agreement.

At that point Hiccup knew, Berk will not fall easily.

* * *

><p>Thank you for reading. Please consider writing a review on what you like, what you didn't like, or both. In fact, criticism is appreciated!

How does everyone think the storyline is shaping out?

~Shonstantin.

8. Chapter 8

Sorry for the long delay, I was experiencing a _really _bad case of 'writer's block'. Suffice to say its better now and I've got a clear outlook on where the story is headed.

**Thank you everyone who favorited and followed the story, and a special thanks to those that reviewed. **

Anyway, enjoy this chapter of Dances and Dreams.

* * *

><p>Chapter 8: The Skrill

A high pitched shrieking sound broke the quiet and calm of the seaside encampment. The sentries posted around the forest of closely built tents and campfires instinctively jumped for cover and ducked, hand over their faces. They did not bother looking for the source of the sound, it was obvious what made it and in the darkness it would be impossible to see where the beast was. Every viking knows what to do when they hear this sound; you run, hide and hope it does not find

you. Vikings would risk their life in battle any day, but to try and take on a nightfury in flight is just clean-cut suicide.

The world around the sentries was illuminated with bright, neon-blue light as a blast of superheated fire hit the encampment. "Odin help us." One of the two sentries prayed, cowering down on the ground. The sound reached them a moment later, the blue explosion sounded like a roar from some beast from Hel, the sound itself being loud and painful to hear. Along with the sound came a wave of heat, washing over them and nullifying the frigid winter air. The sentries considered themselves lucky that they were far enough from the blast to not be burned to a crisp.

As soon as the blast dissipated, one of the sentries took the ram's horn tied on his belt and blew one long blast, alerting the camp of the danger and sounding the untimely alarm that it was. The encampment roared to life, vikings exited their tents and ran for their weapons, some of them ran towards the dragon pens at the far side of the camp attempting to get in the air and launch a counterattack on the aggressors. Teams were set up to fight the fires created by the initial explosion and dozens of warriors started scampering to the sea and back with buckets in order to quench the flames with cold water.

The calm was well and truly broken.

The first blast of fire was not the only that rained down on the vikings below. After the initial explosion dissipated, the camp was attacked with a horde of dragons, each dive-bombing the camp and destroying key targets such as ballistas and catapults. Fires were lighting around the camp faster than those on the ground could put them out, causing the air to be filled with a thick black smoke. Screams of those hit by dragon-blasts echoed through the camp drowning the orders that were shouted by leaders. The night descended into a sort of chaos that even Loki would be proud of

Eventually, they managed to get their own dragons in the air, yet because of the darkness and the thick black smoke the dragons could neither see nor smell the attackers, they were the metaphorical 'sitting ducks'. It didn't take long for the sensory deprived dragons to turn tail and run, their riders just as eager to get away from the mayhem.

The attack seemed to end almost as quickly as it began; one minute blasts of fire were falling from the sky like blazing spears and the next the silence returned. Despite the end of the battle the air was still thick with smoke and countless tents were burning, the flames spreading throughout the undisturbed parts of the encampment. Those that survived the attack attempted to combat the fires but eventually realised it was no use and the fires would overwhelm them. They left the camp, many of those who survived were wounded, burnt and bloody, yet their determination made them continue towards their ships moored on the beach several miles away from the tents, a journey that would take them hours in their condition.

The sun began to rise as the ragged group arrived at the beach, the sea and sand glowing warmly in the dawn light. At their arrival their eyes widened and voices left them as they looked at the scene before them. The beach was covered in the skeletons of ships burned to their core.

Meanwhile flying above a sapphire blue sea was Hiccup mounted on top of a smug looking had his helmet on and his visor down, protecting him from the wind and keeping his unwieldy hair at bay. The two flew seamlessly, they were less like two different beings and more like one creature. As Hiccup no longer had to control Toothless's tail-fin their flying became more instinctive; wherever the viking leaned the dragon followed.

Hiccup leaned forward and Toothless followed suit. They were dropping through the clouds, losing altitude at a breathtaking pace. An island appeared before them and they turned towards it and began coming in for a landing, gliding low above the sea. As they reached the land Toothless angled his wings and almost instantly slowed himself to a stop, landing on the ground in a solid 'thud'.

Another few thuds made the ground vibrate as the rest of Hiccup's squadron landed behind him. Jumping off of Toothless Hiccup took off his helmet letting it drop to the ground. His hair fell loosely as its restraint was taken away and the young man stood there for a moment, grim faced. Toothless turned to face him, sensing his rider's distress and gave him a questioning look. "Good job out there tonight." Hiccup said quietly, "Maybe too much of a good job, I wish we didn't have to do that."

Hiccup sighed, If there was one thing he hated was being responsible for loss of life but as chief he had more than just his feelings and morals to think about, the tribe must be defended; also, you'd think that after two weeks of this war any sentiments would be dropped. The thing about vikings though is that most did not share in Hiccup's sentiments, to a viking you only truly live while you have a sword in your hand on the field of battle and the only acceptable death is in combat. One such viking walked up behind him and greeted him with a hearty slap on his back.

"Hah! That was some great flying out there." Snotlout exclaimed as the brawny viking nearly knocked Hiccup over with his slap, "Not as good as me but impressive anyway."

And there was the mountain sized ego that Hiccup was used to from his cousin.

"I wouldn't say you were flying as much as 'not falling' out there." Astrid countered Snotlout as she got off of Stormfly, the blue dragon looking on in amusement as her rider mocked the brawny viking. You could always rely on Astrid keeping Snotlout's ego in check.

The third and final rider of Hiccup's squadron finally landed on the gravel beach with a heavy thump, his dragon larger than the rest, including Snotlout's monstrous nightmare. He jumped off of his timberjack, a large and light-brown, sharp-winged dragon, looking pleased with himself. His ink-black hair was tied up in a rouge knot and a machete-like dagger hung on his belt. A brown furskin cloak was hanging down his shoulders limply concealing the fact that he was almost shaking with the adrenalin coursing through his veins. Eret walked up to the already gathered group. "Well, chalk one up for the Berk boys." He said, and as Astrid cleared her throat he hastily added, "and Berk's girls too."

"I wouldn't be so quick to celebrate," Astrid began with a slight

frown, "Did you see the sails on their ships?"

"No, I was too high and it was too dark for me to notice." Hiccup returned in answer, "What about them?"

"The sigils." Astrid simply said.

"Yeah, what about them." Snotlout then said inquisitively.

"They weren't all the purple whispering death of the Outcasts, two of the four ships we destroyed had the spiked black skrill of the Berserker tribe."

"That's... That's not good," Hiccup said after a moment of silence, "Are you sure that's what you saw? Maybe their sails were dirty?"

"Very funny." Astrid retorted, "It was a skrill on their sails, I'm sure of it."

"Great, just what we needed right now." Hiccup said darkly, "Why not add an armada of Berserkers against us, it's not like the Outcasts were enough of a problem!"

Anger should have been his first reaction or maybe even outrage or fear, but the only thing Hiccup felt was a sharp sense of annoyance at the Outcasts; they just had to go and make the war harder on the both of them. It was the previous Outcast war all over again, exactly the same as four years ago. Well, close enough, this time the Outcasts are allied to the Berserkers, not conquered by them, and with dragons added to the mix... it's not going to end as peacefully as the last one did.

As all this went through his mind, Hiccup noticed that he was pacing nervously. He attempted to calm down, taking a few deep breaths and regaining his composure. "We need to get back to Berk." Hiccup said finally, "The safety of the village is our top priority, we need to see to it." The others just nodded as they remounted their dragons.

They took to the skies, wind rushing past their faces at incredible speeds. Upon the backs of their dragons they soon left the small island they regrouped on behind, slowly disappearing behind the horizon. Setting a course towards home they rose above the clouds and flew quickly in silence. Well, the loud rushing air was not what one would call 'silent'.

After a half-hour of flying the squadron of riders saw Odin's Spear, the huge pike-like mountain that struck out from Berk, coming over the horizon. They lowered until they were far beneath the clouds, flying in a 'V' formation. Suddenly, Hiccup heard a zipping sound as a crossbow bolt flew near him and Toothless.

A group of four warships were sailing far beneath them, their sails extended by the wind. The crew of the ship was on deck, weapons in hand. Two of the ships were armed with ballistas which were now being drawn. The massive spear-like arrows were pulled back and the sights were aimed at the dragons above; at Hiccup and his squadron.

"Everyone move! Now!" Hiccup yelled as he saw the ships targeting them. All the riders immediately split their formation, flying in patternless paths in order to make themselves less of a target. A ballista spear flew past them, harmlessly missing all of the dragons. It was quickly followed by another one that was closer to its mark yet missed nonetheless. Hiccup saw the opportunity, the ballistas were being reloaded. "Eret, take care of those ships!" He ordered, Eret nodded in confirmation from the back of Pikeglider.

The brown timberjack soared down to where his underbelly was almost skimming on the crystal-blue water, his spiked wings spread wide, eyes narrowed in wrathful determination. Eret was leaning forward in his saddle, looking at the fleet of ships ahead. On the sails of the ships was a curled, black skrill; Astrid was right.

Eret leaned as close as he could to Pikeglider as he readied for what he was going to go. Angling his sharp, spiked wings, the brown dragon flew through the cluster of ships, a loud cracking and splintering sound heralding this action. He looped around for another pass. The ships before the dragon and rider were crippled; their masts were no longer standing but instead have fallen on the hull of the longboats, cracking the deck. As the two made their second pass, Pikeglider blew a flurry of red and orange flames at the ship, igniting the and causing the crew to jump off or be consumed by the flames.

Eret returned to formation.

"Hah! Nice one!" Snotlout yelled from ontop of Hookfang.

"Thanks, I think." Returned Eret in reply.

He flew up beside Hiccup and Astrid at the front of the squadron, gliding just higher the two. Hiccup turned his helmeted head towards him as he flew up close.

"You alright Eret?" Hiccup asked

"Yeah, a lot better than those guys on the ships." Eret replied with a hint of comedy, then switching his voice to a darker tone he added, "By the way, Astrid was right, the Berzerkers are allied with Alvin."

Hiccup cringed. It's not like he didn't believe Astrid when she said she saw the black skrill on the sails of the moored ships, but a small part of him hoped she was wrong, that it was the consequence of the dim moonlight or the flickering shadows of the wildfire raging in the outcast encampment. There was no doubt of the fact now, no chance it was a miso-sight, in the broad daylight it was apparent they were up against a much larger force than what they first thought, and this chilled him to the core.

Knowing what an alliance between the Outcasts and the Berzerkers is capable of made Hiccup mutter a silent prayer to Tyr. It wasn't the first time the vikings of Berk went up against this alliance, just five years ago they defeated their combined force in a hellish battle that damn near destroyed the Outcast's home island. The only difference was that back then they had a few advantages in their corner. First of all, they were then the only tribe that rode dragons; unlike now when the Outcasts have the same ability. The second advantage, and the one that most likely won them the war was

that the Berzerker leader, Dagur the Deranged, betrayed Alvin the Treacherous causing the latter to fight alongside the Berkian tribe in the liberation of his own.

'And how does he repay us?' Hiccup thought to himself.

The problem this time around is that Dagur is no longer the chief of the Berserkers and the current chief is not foolish enough to make the same mistake again.

Hiccup knew what he had to do.

"We are going straight to Berk," He began, "I am recalling all raiding parties, bringing all the scouts back, rallying the riders on Berk and calling off all planned attacks."

This announcement was met with a flurry of questions from Snotlout, Astrid and Eret, who were now gliding near him. He held up his hand for silence, then said stern faced, "It's the only way, we have to create an ironclad defense around the island or these might be the final days of Berk."

* * *

><p>I hope you enjoyed. The story is reaching a climax, but worry not! There are still a few more chapters to go before I take a break from "Dances and Dreams".

In the meantime, I am working on another story and will give you more information on that later on (unless I see that people want to know more about it earlier, then I might put an excerpt from it into the A/N of the next chapter.)

**Anyway, remember to review, follow or favorite!
**

~Shonstantin.

End
file.